

8 deportees permitted to return

AMMAN (AP) — Israel has given permission for eight more Palestinian deportees to return to their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said. It would be the third batch of Palestinian deportees to be allowed home since April and comes as a result of negotiations between Israel and the PLO since the launching of the Middle East peace process in September 1991. They will travel to be set, said Omar Khatib, deputy chief of the PLO mission in Amman. Nearly 80 deportees returned home in two earlier groups. Mr. Khatib said the latest batch of eight were part of a group of 80 Palestinians Israel has tentatively agreed to allow to return home. The Palestinians have been living in Jordan. Mr. Khatib identified them as: Othman Dawoud, Jamal Jabara, Hani Hakoub, Issam Al Rabasi, Mohammad Al Moutawwer, Jamal Abu Latif, Noureddin Al Jaabari and Mohammad Amin Al Jaabari.

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Regent visits army unit

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Saturday visited troops of the Third Royal Armoured Division, watched exercises and was briefed on the training programmes. The Regent also inspected troops conducting maintenance of military equipment and met commanders and officers.

Iraq to press for timing of end to U.N. sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq will press a senior U.N. envoy due to visit Baghdad this weekend to give a timetable for the easing or lifting of U.N. sanctions, diplomats said Saturday. Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq, is due to arrive in Iraq on Sunday at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, U.N. sources said. It will be his second visit this year. "The Iraqis will press Ekeus for a timetable to have the sanctions eased or lifted," a diplomat said. "The embargo has inflicted tremendous harm on the Iraqi people and caused... miseries which cannot be accepted under any circumstances," the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra said in a commentary. "Iraq has honoured its commitment and political... pledges as far as Security Council resolutions are concerned," it added (see page 2).

Kabul fighting leaves 158 injured

KABUL (AFP) — At least 158 people were injured in an overnight battle that erupted in Kabul between rival forces fighting for and against President Burhanuddin Rabbani, officials said here Saturday. Troops exchanged artillery and heavy weapons fire during the clash, but government troops said they had "repulsed" renegade fighters of Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. They also claimed that "heavy casualties" were inflicted on the troops of Mr. Hekmatyar and Uzbek fighters of militia warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, the premier's main battle ally. Mr. Hekmatyar's Shiite ally, the Hezb-e-Wahdat faction, also joined the battle, engaging Mr. Rabbani's troops at the city's south, the government troops said.

Egyptian president visits UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Saturday for talks with President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, the official news agency WAM reported. It gave no further details of the visit but Egypt and the UAE have been involved in mediation to end Yemen's political crisis. Two Egyptian and UAE ministers met separately with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his rival, Vice President Ali Salim Al Beidh in Sanaa and Aden this month and gave letters from their leaders. They later reported progress and another Egyptian delegation will go to Yemen soon. "There will be a visit to Yemen by an Egyptian delegation soon but its date has not been set yet," Egyptian Ambassador in Sanaa, Ataa Harun, was quoted on Saturday as saying by the UAE magazine Al Shuruq. Mr. Mubarak earlier met Sultan Qaboos during a visit to Oman, which has brought the Yemeni leaders together but failed to end the impasse.

Iranians attack U.N. offices in Tehran

NICOSIA (AP) — Demonstrators Saturday pelted the U.N. building in Tehran with stones and eggs and burned the U.S. flag to protest international inaction on Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. But the U.N. resident coordinator in Tehran, Michael Schulenburg, the only foreign staffer in the office at the time, told the Associated Press by phone that the "demonstration was very small

Syria welcomes Rabin comments on settlements as step for peace

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria on Saturday welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's offer to dismantle Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights as a step forward but said peace was impossible without a full withdrawal from the Golan.

The official Syrian newspaper Tishreen, referring to remarks by Mr. Rabin on Thursday that he would evacuate settlements for the sake of peace, urged him to turn his words into deeds.

"We could say that a step was made by Rabin when he recognised the necessity of dismantling settlements and that peace, not settlements, would provide security," Tishreen said. It added: "... Rabin knows well that peace with Syria is impossible without the return of the whole Golan..."

Mr. Rabin, who as Israeli army chief seized the Golan Heights during the 1967 Middle East war, said he would dismantle Jewish settlements there, in return for peace. He stopped short of Syria's demand for full Israeli withdrawal.

Tishreen noted that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was due to start a new peace mission to Israel and its Arab neighbours on Sunday. (see page 10).

"We hope that Rabin's remarks are not a manoeuvre on the occasion of Christopher's tour because the peace process is stalled and the chances of peace are narrowing day after day..."

Mr. Christopher will meet Syrian President Hafez Al Assad next week to discuss how to break a deadlock in the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations. He is also due to meet

Israeli leaders, including Mr. Rabin. "Giving a statement here or a statement there by Rabin is not enough. Intentions, if they are true, should be translated into action on the ground," Tishreen added.

"... The achievement of the slightest progress would be impossible without a dramatic change in the Israeli position," Tishreen said.

The Israeli daily Haaretz said Israel would give Mr. Christopher an outline peace accord with Syria referring to an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.

Mr. Rabin told reporters Friday that dismantling settlements was inevitable and he hinted that it would happen in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as the Golan Heights. "Once we'll reach an agreement about peace treaties with an Arab country or some Arab factor, then the issue will be brought up," he said.

Mr. Rabin had said Thursday that he was ready to dismantle settlements on the Golan Heights for peace with Syria, his first explicit commitment to moving settlers. Palestinian spokesmen said they were pleased, even though Mr. Rabin had confined his remarks to negotiations with Syria.

On Friday, Mr. Rabin went further, saying settlement was impossible wherever Israel evacuated.

"Whichever areas we decide to vacate for peace, I will not ask the Israeli settlers to stay there," he said.

Israel and the PLO are close to signing an agreement that will introduce limited Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip

(Continued on page 5)

Self-rule talks in decisive week

TUNIS (Agencies) — Talks on Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories enter a crucial week on Sunday with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) saying the onus is on Israel to supply responses on issues obstructing the path to a deal.

And while PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has spoken of the drawn-out peace process reaching the end of a "long march," Palestinian officials are not allowing themselves to celebrate prematurely.

Talks on security in the occupied territories are to resume on Sunday in Cairo and economic cooperation talks are being held on Monday in Paris, while U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher starts a Middle East tour during the week when he is expected to meet Mr. Arafat and Israeli officials (see page 10).

Mr. Arafat is tentatively expected to fly to Cairo on Tuesday or Wednesday to meet Mr.

Christopher and also to be close to Palestinian negotiators if completion of the accord looks likely, PLO sources said.

"... We are expecting Israel's definite responses to several pending issues in security and economic areas," a close aide to Mr. Arafat told Reuters.

But although PLO officials have intensified their preparations for taking over the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area of the West Bank, PLO officials are not over-confident that a deal can be reached.

"It is difficult to make a prognosis, there are still some important issues which need solutions," PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo said.

The negotiations are now in their fifth month and have already missed two of the deadlines set in the preliminary agreement Israel and the PLO

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Palestinian shot dead in Gaza

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israeli troops and settlers shot dead one Palestinian and seriously wounded another on Saturday after an Israeli woman was knifed in a settlement in the Gaza Strip.

Later in the occupied West Bank, unknown assailants shot dead a suspected Palestinian collaborator in a street in Hebron and an Israeli soldier was seriously wounded when a Palestinian fired at him in Nablus.

Military and Palestinian sources said three Palestinians cut through the security fence surrounding the Gaza settlement at dawn and then stabbed a 22-year-old woman who lived there. She suffered serious chest wounds.

Settlers and troops rushed to the scene and opened fire on the Palestinians, killing one and seriously wounding another, who was arrested. The third fled.

The Israeli woman was rushed to hospital by helicopter.

The army sealed off the area, part of the Gush Katif group of settlements near Khan Yunis, and launched a manhunt. Residents of Khan Yunis said many young Palestinians were arrested.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, claimed responsibility for the stabbing. On Thursday, Hamas claimed responsibility for the stabbing death of an Israeli soldier whose body was found dumped in a West Bank village just north of Jerusalem.



A policeman guides the victim's father (right) away from the Sidon court execution chamber after Bassam Saleh Mousleh, 22, was hanged on Saturday for the rape and murder of his eight-year-old daughter (AFP photo)

Lebanon carries out first legal execution since 1983

SIDON (Agencies) — A 23-year-old man was hanged at daybreak Saturday for the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl. It was the first legal execution in Lebanon in more than a decade.

Bassam Saleh Mousleh went to the gallows at 5:10 a.m. (0210GMT) in the courtyard of the house of justice in the old quarter of Sidon, provincial capital of South Lebanon. He was declared dead two minutes later by Coroner Moueene Bousi.

Lebanon reactivated the death penalty last month in a bid to restore law and order after the 1975-90 civil war, in which rival militias set up their

own courts and put dozens of alleged criminals to death.

Capital punishment for premeditated murder was suspended in 1984 under international pressure. But a sharp rise in crime rate in the last three months prompted the government to terminate the suspension.

"The era of erecting the scaffolds has begun," President Elias Hrawi said before the execution.

As part of its law-and-order drive, the government was cracked down on the Lebanese Forces, a former militia group whose leaders are being interrogated in connection with assassinations and bombings

(see page 2).

Mosleh, a Muslim, was told he was going to be hanged only 45 minutes before the execution. He prayed in his prison cell and was given his final rites by a Muslim cleric.

"I am innocent," he told the cleric, Sheikh Fuad Masri, who countered: "No, you've committed a crime."

About 150 spectators were kept about 250 metres away from the execution site by police, who had cordoned off the area since Thursday night. They were allowed to view the dangling body half an hour after the hanging.

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Senators debate law on municipal councils

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of Parliament (Senate) held a meeting Saturday under the chairmanship of Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi and in the presence of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and Cabinet members.

The Senate endorsed a draft law on municipal service as it was referred to it by the Lower House after introducing minor amendments to it.

The Senate also started debate on the 1994 municipalities draft law, and approved the first two paragraphs of article one. The senators were divided over supporting the views of the Lower House or the government on the third paragraph which defines the percentage of elected and appointed members of the Greater Amman Municipal Council.

The Lower House version of the paragraph stipulates that the number of members appointed by the Cabinet in the council should not exceed half the number of the elected members.

The government's draft of the paragraph states that the number of elected and appointed members should be equal.

They appeared to be racing to complete their objectives in the U.N. "safe area" before a U.N. deadline for them to withdraw by 0001 GMT on Sunday or face massive retaliation from the air.

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) unleashed a ferocious tank, artillery and infantry assault despite NATO's warning and a noon (1000 GMT) ceasefire agreed with the U.N. by their political and military leaders.

A Muslim commander told the U.N. observers that fighting was heavy around the Fob-jeda ammunition factory, a third of which has fallen to the Serbs during an onslaught that has killed 100 people a day this week.

He said the Serbs mined their part of the plant and hit the rest with at least 30 shells in an attempt to destroy the Muslims' capacity to arm themselves. The NATO ultimatum on Friday gave alliance commanders the power to hit the Serbs

World pays tribute to Nixon

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Tributes flowed in from around the world Saturday for Richard Nixon, whose diplomatic triumphs from Moscow to Beijing stood in stark contrast to his legacy as the central figure in the whirlpool of Watergate.

Nixon, who died Friday at age 81 following a stroke, continued until the end of his life to offer behind-the-scenes advice to many of the world's power brokers.

Nixon never recovered from a stroke he suffered Monday at his home in Park Ridge, New Jersey. His daughters, Julie Eisenhower and Tricia Cox, were by his side.

Nixon, the nation's 37th president and the first to resign the office, never regained consciousness after he sank into a coma Thursday at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Centre.

He had left a living will that said he wanted no extraordin-

ary measures taken to prolong his life and he was not put on a respirator, which might have relieved swelling in the brain. It is unlikely he could have recovered from partial paralysis and loss of speech.

Leaders from Washington to Beijing praised Nixon's accomplishments, his political savvy and his dedication, despite the political storm called Watergate that forced him to resign in 1974.

The former congressman, senator, vice president and president left "his mark on his times as few national figures have done in our history," President Bill Clinton said.

"To be sure, he experienced his fair share of adversity and controversy, but his resilience and his diligent desire to give something back to this country and to the world provide a lesson for all of us about maintaining our faith in the future,"

(Continued on page 5)

Hamas: Israel arrested more than 2,700

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said Saturday the Israeli army arrested more than 2,700 Palestinians in the last two weeks, but added its members would still continue to attack Israelis. These arrests "which affect all those suspected of links to Hamas will not prevent more operations by the (armed wing) Izzeddin Al Qassam nor the popular resistance" against Israeli occupation, Hamas said in a statement to AFP here. Palestinian sources in the occupied territories have said that the Israeli army had arrested more than 500 activists in a bid to destroy the group after several attacks that claimed the lives of 14 Israelis this month. The mass roundup "comes at a time when the enemy government prepares to release thousands of prisoners who don't belong to Hamas in a bid to divide the Palestinian people," it said. Israel is to set free around 5,000 prisoners after the signing of a final deal to launch autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, which may take place in May. Israeli negotiators have rejected requests to set free members of groups opposed to peace.

Regent deplores violence in sports

Federation adopts disciplinary action against 2 soccer clubs

By P.V. Vivekanand and Aileen Bannayan

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Saturday deplored the violence that erupted during a football match in Amman on Friday and called on the youth to live up to the spirit of sportsmanship.

In comments on radio and television, the Regent said the violence was particularly deplorable since it came as "the world is bracing to watch the World Cup (tournament which begins in the U.S. on June 17) on television."

The Regent noted that youth conferences had always stressed that "sports are not a muscular or physical quest, but are a moral issue."

Expressing pain and regret over all forms of violence, the Regent called on the youth, "regardless of their origin, to give due care and attention to sports and sportsmanship."

Many other officials, including Minister of Youth Abdullah Oweidat and sports committee heads, condemned the violence and called on the youth to abstain from such a behaviour which damages the image of the country.

"Those who do not understand sportsmanlike behaviour should stay away from our sports arena," Mr. Oweidat said. "We do not need those

who undermine public safety and distort the image of our sports movement."

It was a rare case of mass violence in Jordan, which last witnessed a serious clash among soccer fans in 1985 at the same stadium and pitting the supporters of the same two clubs.

More than 100 people were injured in Friday's riots that started with a clash on the field during a match between Al Faisali and Al Wihdat sports clubs watched by more than 20,000 people. The clash was sparked when two players kicked each other after a tackling incident during play.

As the two hit each other, their colleagues on the ground joined the melee and fans from the two sides clashed with each other. In the ensuing frenzy, facilities at the recently-innovated stadium and the nearby King Hussein Youth Club were damaged.

Thirty minutes into the 45-minute free-for-all, the match was officially called off. Police used tear-gas to disperse the crowd. Several policemen were also injured.

Also hit in the violence were vehicles parked outside, including the buses of the two teams and a bus belonging to Radio Jordan.

The tone for violence during the match appeared to have

(Continued on page 5)



This official White House photo shows the late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev (left) with then President Richard Nixon, who died Friday (AFP photo)

Serbs race against ultimatum clock

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serb forces defying the threat of immediate North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) air strikes poured shells into Gorazde and its ammunition factory on Saturday, U.N. military observers in the town said.

They appeared to be racing to complete their objectives in the U.N. "safe area" before a U.N. deadline for them to withdraw by 0001 GMT on Sunday or face massive retaliation from the air.

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) unleashed a ferocious tank, artillery and infantry assault despite NATO's warning and a noon (1000 GMT) ceasefire agreed with the U.N. by their political and military leaders.

A Muslim commander told the U.N. observers that fighting was heavy around the Fob-jeda ammunition factory, a third of which has fallen to the Serbs during an onslaught that has killed 100 people a day this week.

He said the Serbs mined their part of the plant and hit the rest with at least 30 shells in an attempt to destroy the Muslims' capacity to arm themselves.

The NATO ultimatum on Friday gave alliance commanders the power to hit the Serbs

immediately if fighting continued but U.N. sources said authorisation was refused by United Nations envoy Yasushi Akashi.

"Akashi is absolutely firm nothing should happen before the (deadline)," the sources said. "We are not prepared for anything before that. He must give the formal go-ahead for air strikes."

Mr. Akashi, who has been criticised by the U.N. and NATO military for indecision, negotiated the ceasefire on Friday with Serb leaders including BSA commander General Ratko Mladic.

The source conceded the renewed fighting was ominous and added: "We gave them a last and good chance. Akashi went the extra mile and if the Bosnian Serbs cannot get their act together fast, they will have brought it down on their own heads, literally."

In an apparent signal that the U.N. believed the Serbs would withdraw from Gorazde at some time on Saturday, a convoy of U.N. peacekeeping troops left Sarajevo during the afternoon for the town 70 kilometres to the east.

The Serb attack after an overnight lull prompted fears that Gen. Mladic, a hardline Serb nationalist contemptuous of the West and political res-

traint, may have opted for a showdown with NATO.

The U.S.-led alliance ordered him to withdraw his forces three kilometres from the centre of Gorazde by the Sunday deadline and 20 kilometres from the town by Wednesday.

U.S. Defence Department officials said a task force of 200 NATO jets was on standby in Italy and the Adriatic in readiness to attack up to 60 Serb gun positions if Gen. Mladic did not obey.

The BSA accused Gorazde's defenders of provoking the renewed fighting on Saturday with artillery and small arms fire which killed two Serb soldiers and wounded two.

U.N. military spokesman Dacre Holloway acknowledged there had been some Muslim firing but said the "indiscriminate" Serb response had been out of proportion.

The U.N. observers and Gorazde Mayor Ismet Briga reported scores of artillery and tank rounds hit the Muslim town shortly before noon and firing continued well into the afternoon.

Mr. Briga said the hospital was in flames. The observers confirmed the building was hit and said the northwest and northeast suburbs were under

attack by the Serbs who have killed almost 700 people in Gorazde and surrounding Muslim villages since launching their offensive on March 29.

The ultimatum was issued, after a week of Serb humiliation of U.N. peacekeepers as forces personally led by Mladic brushed aside ceasefires, downed a NATO jet and suspended relations with the U.N. in retaliation for two symbolic NATO air strikes.

The offensive against Gorazde has cost Bosnian Serbs the support of Russia. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev backed the ultimatum although Moscow earlier criticised NATO's involvement.

He told Interfax news agency the BSA's actions "issued a criminal challenge to the elementary norms of humane behaviour, to the demands of the United Nations and also of Russia."

U.N. hopes to evacuate some of the worst casualties of the fighting by helicopter to Sarajevo and abroad on Sunday if the Serbs comply with the ultimatum.

The NATO decision on air strikes also covers four other safe havens — Tuzla, Zepa, Srebrenica and Bihac — if the Serbs threaten or even appear to threaten them.

هذه امه للأهل

Israel seeks peace dividends from Gulf

By John West
Reuter

TEL AVIV — Israel's first official trip to a Gulf state has whetted the appetite of policymakers and businessmen who see the lucrative and high importing Gulf Arab markets as a real dividend of Middle East peace.

For all the talk of a Middle East common market, Israelis increasingly home in on Gulf states as their regional trading partners of the future, rather than neighbours like Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

Deputy Foreign Minister (Yossi) Beilin, who led Israel's team to multilateral talks on water in Oman, said he met senior officials from Oman and other Gulf states on the sidelines to discuss bilateral trade ties.

"Cooperation with Israel is something very tangible for us. Israel's economic ties with the Gulf countries could be much more intensive than with our neighbours. There is much more complementarity with the Gulf countries," he told reporters.

While the Israelis talk of breaking psychological barriers, Gulf-based diplomats warn them not to expect too much too soon.

So far only Oman and Qatar have held public talks with Israel. Qatar is interested in Israel as a regular customer for its huge gas reserves but says trade must wait until Israel signs peace with all its Arab negotiating partners.

Israeli businessmen say they have met counterparts from the other Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, in contacts that have intensified since the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement in September.

"The advantages of peace with Syria are more political than economic. But as far as the real economic dividends of peace, they lie in the Gulf," said Dan Gillerman, chairman of the Israel chamber of commerce.

"Israel's gross domestic product of \$67 billion is more than that of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the terror-

ies combined," he told Reuters.

Mr. Beilin said Israel had identified semi-arid agriculture, medical services, hi-tech electronics and training as sectors where Israel could dovetail with the needs of Gulf countries.

For states like Oman and Bahrain, planning for life when oil exports dry up, Israeli technology could help them diversify and get closer to food self-sufficiency. For Israel, their combined imports of over \$5 billion represent sizeable markets.

Mr. Beilin said the desalination Oman relies on for water supplies costs \$2 per cubic metre, three times more expensive than Israel's own production. "If they can reduce the price of desalination, for them it will be a very big revolution."

For Qatar and to a lesser extent Kuwait, energy-scarce Israel could offer useful technology in exchange for oil and gas and help diversify their trading partners, an important consideration for the small and import-reliant states.

One analyst of Tel Aviv's stock market said he expected the exchange's index to jump as much as 15 per cent following any Israeli-Syrian peace deal. But fuelling the boom would be trade prospects in the Gulf and elsewhere, rather than with the Arab countries that border Israel.

Arab diplomats say Syria, afraid of being left out, is working hard to stop the mutual economic interests of Israel and Gulf states bearing fruit before it strikes its own peace deal.

The Syrian press launched blistering attacks on Israel's participation in the Oman talks and Syrian diplomats have led efforts to make sure an Arab League boycott to Israel stands.

"I'm sure Iran is not very happy at Israel developing ties in the Gulf. But those who are really trying to stop it are the Syrians," Mr. Beilin said.

Geagea's political career may be over

BEIRUT (Agencies) — The detention of Samir Geagea for questioning about a church bombing and the murder of a rival Christian leader may be the final blow to one of Lebanon's most controversial warlords.

Political analysts say that even if Dr. Geagea, head of the banned Lebanese Forces (LF), was found innocent of the Feb. 27 church bombing that killed 11 people and the 1990 murder of Dani Chamoun and his family, his political career may not survive.

The Maronite leader, who hails from the mountain village of Bsharri in northern Lebanon where the first Maronite monks took refuge in the Middle Ages, portrayed himself as a man of faith with a mission to preserve his Christian community.

The Lebanese Forces gave 10,000 martyrs to defend the church, now they accuse it of bombing a church. It is not possible," Dr. Geagea, 42, said in March before the LF was banned and several members charged with the attack.

"What else is there? Shortly they will accuse me of crucifying Christ," newspapers on Friday quoted Dr. Geagea as saying before his detention.

During Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, Dr. Geagea, a former medical student addressed by following as hakim

(doctor), inspired devotion as the only man his followers believed strong and wily enough to guarantee Christian security.

But many Muslims and some Christians see him as an Israeli-backed bandit and killer who will stop at nothing to keep any government weak and the Maronites dominant.

His name was linked to many disastrous Christian military defeats, as well as wartime atrocities.

Dr. Geagea became notorious when he led an attack on the village home of Toni Frangieh, son of former President Suleiman Frangieh in the early days of the civil war.

Toni, his daughter and wife and a number of bodyguards were killed and Dr. Geagea suffered a serious shoulder injury. His right arm has still not recovered.

In 1986 he led a rebellion against LF chief Elie Hobeika, who had signed a Syrian-backed peace pact with Muslim warlords. Mr. Hobeika was ousted, Dr. Geagea became LF commander and annulled the agreement.

Adamantly opposed to Syrian influence in Lebanon, he agreed to the 1989 Taif accord that ended the civil war only after rebel Christian General Michel Aoun launched a four-month war to crush the LF in 1990.

Gen. Aoun failed and Dr.

Geagea stood by as Syrian troops ousted him on Oct. 13, 1990, the day officially accepted as the end of the war.

In the last months of the war and first weeks of peace, Dr. Geagea suggested a federal system, giving Christians their own self-governing region. His critics accused him of wanting to split Lebanon into religious cantons.

A keen reader of political books, Dr. Geagea is married with no children.

The clampdown of the Lebanese Forces underlines the complex political and sectarian forces still in play in Lebanon as it struggles to rebuild after the 15-year war.

It could well presage similar moves against the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, the only militia which has not been disbanded under the 1989 Taif accord.

Hizbollah refuses to lay down its weapons, claiming they are needed to fight the Israelis occupying a strip of South Lebanon.

It opposes Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, a billionaire from the rival Sunni Muslim sect. So far he has been unable to justify moving against Muslims fighting to liberate occupied Lebanese soil.

But, with a Mideast peace settlement in sight, he may have to soon, and eliminating weakened Christian opponents first clears the way to

bring those who defy central authority to heel.

The government outlawed the Lebanese Forces March 23 after the onetime militia's offices were seized and several leading members arrested for the church bombing.

That was a far cry from the closing years of the war, when Dr. Geagea ruthlessly ruled the Christian hinterland, saying he was protecting the Westernised Maronites from Muslim domination.

But even under siege, he was defiant, declaring: "Nothing in this world would make us change our convictions."

He denied involvement in the church bombing and the Chamoun slaughter. He claimed Mr. Hariri is out to weaken the disorganised and largely leaderless Maronites, the main Christian sect which dominated Lebanon until the war.

During that conflict, Dr. Geagea's Lebanese forces was the most powerful Christian militia.

Still, the 6,000-strong force voluntarily disbanded in 1991 under the peace plan, even though that shifted the balance of power to the Muslims.

Dr. Geagea transformed the militia into a political party that spoke for right-wing Maronites.

Iraqi diplomats said to confess murdering Suheil

BEIRUT (AP) — Two Iraqi diplomats have confessed to participating in the April 12 assassination of a prominent opponent of the Iraqi regime, judicial sources said.

Hadi Hassan, a low-ranking diplomat at the now-closed Iraqi embassy in Beirut, and Consul Ali Sultan Darwish, were apprehended by Lebanese plainclothes detectives at Beirut airport Thursday.

The arrests came moments before the suspects and three other expelled diplomats prepared to board a flight out of the country. The other diplomats were allowed to leave.

Mr. Hassan and Mr. Darwish were wanted for questioning in connection with the assassination of Sheikh Taleb Ali Al Suheil, a key figure in a 1993 plot to overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Darwish is allegedly an intelligence chief who masterminded the assassination. He and Mr. Hassan had been holed up at the embassy since the murder.

Investigating Magistrate Abdullah Bitar interrogated the pair for 12 hours Friday at

police headquarters in Beirut, said the judicial sources.

Mr. Hassan confessed that he opened fire from a silenced pistol as the 64-year-old Al Suheil answered the door at his Beirut apartment, the sources said. Al Suheil was killed with a single bullet through the heart.

Mr. Darwish admitted he participated in planning the murder, said the sources, who requested anonymity.

The two were ordered booked in solitary confinement.

Mr. Hassan and Mr. Darwish join two other Iraqi diplomats in police custody, Iraqi Cultural Attaché Mohammad Kadhem and Commercial Attaché Khaled Alwan Khalaf were arrested hours after the murder. Authorities say they, too, have admitted complicity in the killing.

A Lebanese employee of the Iraqi embassy, George Teredjian, who allegedly drove the diplomats to Al Suheil's apartment, has been arrested and charged with complicity in the slaying.

Iraq helps close loopholes in chemical arms data

BAHRAIN (AP) — Iraq, which destroyed all documentation of the chemical weapons programme it was developing before the Gulf war, helped U.N. inspectors gather information about the arsenal through a special seminar of Iraqi experts, a U.N. official said Friday.

Horst Reeps, a German, who heads a seven-member team of U.N. chemical weapons inspectors, spoke to reporters upon return from a four-day trip to Baghdad.

Without documentation of the chemical weapons programme, Mr. Reeps said his team "had to search for indirect proof" which Iraq helped provide through a seminar where its experts "recollected data."

Also provided were "quite credible" handwritten copies of original purchase orders, customs papers and other peripheral documentation, including electricity bills for production sites, said Mr. Reeps.

Mr. Reeps said his team still needed to evaluate the new information and check it

against data they already have.

The U.N. Security Council ordered the elimination of Iraq's stock of chemical and biological arsenals, ballistic missiles and a nuclear weapons programme after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf war. Its resolutions also called for the installation of a monitoring system to prevent the acquisition or production of these weapons.

An oil embargo and sweeping trade sanctions that were imposed on Iraq after the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait can be lifted only after Baghdad has complied with the U.N. resolutions.

The sanctions have left Iraq's oil-based economy in tatters with severe shortages in basic commodities contributing to growing public discontent.

U.N. inspectors have reported the Iraqis being much more compliant in recent months. The change of attitude is attributed to the bite of the trade sanctions and the Baghdad government's desperate desire for them to end.

Papandreou: Denktash has accepted U.N. moves

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The leader of the Turkish community on Cyprus may have accepted U.N. measures aimed at building confidence on the divided island of Cyprus, Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou said Friday.

Mr. Papandreou, on a visit to Washington, said an aide to President Bill Clinton had told him that Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash may have agreed to support the U.N. measures.

"This I did not know until I came to the White House. If so, it's a good sign," Mr. Papandreou said at a joint White House press conference with Mr. Clinton.

The measures include reopening the international airport in Nicosia under U.N. supervision and placing the tourist resort of Varosha, a suburb of Famagouste port,

under U.N. control.

The Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus have until the end of the month to agree on steps designed to build trust between the Greek and Turkish communities.

"The United States supports the U.N. confidence-building measures," Mr. Clinton said. "We have better conditions to resolve the differences between Greece and Turkey and to have a new basis of responsible and fair cooperation than at any time in a long while."

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Papandreou also discussed Bosnia and Macedonia during their meeting.

Mr. Clinton said the United States understood Greece's worries about Macedonia, which Greece accuses of having designs on a northern Greek region of the same name. Mr. Clinton said, however, that he was "more

optimistic" about chances of resolving the dispute.

Greece has ordered an embargo against Macedonia to try to force it to stop using what Greece says are wholly Greek symbols and making what Athens considers provocative statements about northern Greece.

Greece protests Macedonia's official use of the star of Vergina, an ancient symbol associated with Alexander the Great, a Macedonian credited with spreading the Greek culture.

"It was not with pleasure that we imposed an embargo, with the exception of food and pharmaceuticals, on Skopje," Mr. Papandreou said, referring to the Macedonian capital. "We are prepared to lift the embargo, to normalise economic relations fully, to vote for the membership of the state in the CSCE (Conference on

Security and Cooperation in Europe), to support an agreement within the European Community and that state, provided simply that (Skopje) does one act: Remove the sun of Vergina and declare that the constitution in those particular articles is not valid," Mr. Papandreou said.

Mr. Papandreou's offer did not include the dispute over the country's name, which Greeks say they alone have the right to use. Mr. Papandreou said he would keep "the question of the name, which is a difficult one, as a matter of negotiation."

Mr. Clinton said "we are hopeful that an agreement can soon be reached that will lead to the lifting of the trade embargo and a resumption of a dialogue to resolve the legitimate differences which Greece is concerned with."

Palestinian police chiefs pledge to respect rights

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip (AFP) — Senior members of the future Palestinian police force pledged to respect human rights here Friday, but a leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas voiced fears that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) would dominate the force.

PLO and Hamas officials discussed the future 9,000-strong force, due to be deployed in Gaza and Jericho, at a seminar organised by the Gaza branch of the London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International.

They were meeting on the day PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's main Fatah faction signed a truce with Hamas to end months of conflict. They pledged to resolve their differences through dialogue in future.

It was the first high-level public debate between the two rival groups.

The Palestinian police are to be sent into Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho once Israel and the PLO have resolved outstanding problems delaying the launch of Palestinian self-rule. The negotiators are due to resume talks in Cairo Sunday.

They are still divided over the scope of Palestinian law in the future autonomous territories, the composition of a Palestinian governing council and the issue of prisoner releases.

The police force will consist of 7,000 diaspora Palestinians and 2,000 from the occupied territories.

"We don't want the Palestinian police to be blacklisted by human rights organisations," said General Ziyad Arafat of the PLO.

Mr. Arafat had recently appointed Ibrahim Abu Daqa as his special advisor on human rights, Gen. Arafat said.

Mr. Abu Daqa is a lawyer and resident of the Gaza Strip, currently living in Tunis.

Mr. Arafat has been criticised from within his own ranks for an allegedly authoritarian leadership style, and several senior Palestinian officials have pressed for more democracy in the PLO.

Gen. Arafat said some of the future Palestinian policemen had received training with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Cairo and Amman.

Another senior PLO official, Rashid Abu Shbak, said there could be "no success without democracy."

"We don't want Palestinians of one style, one voice," he added.

However, a Hamas leader challenged the pledges given by the PLO. "Ziyad (Arafat) has presented a rosy picture, and Rashid (Abu Shbak) improved on it," said Mahmoud Al Zahhar.

"Let us be realistic. We have worries concerning Palestinian power and human rights."

Mr. Zahhar raised doubts about the future of some 150 private mosques in Gaza run by families, which came under neither the Israeli-controlled religious endowments authority, nor the Muslim body responsible for religious property, the Waqf.

The private mosques are generally controlled by Hamas or Fatah.

"Will they be nationalised?" asked Mr. Zahhar.

He also voiced concern that most of the police force would be recruited from diaspora Palestinians and PLO members.

"This is good, but we are also afraid. We hope people from abroad won't be given posts (in the police) according to loyalties."

NEWS IN BRIEF

45 drown off Syrian coast

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Forty-one primary schoolchildren and four women teachers drowned when the boat they were in sank off the coast of northern Syria Friday, the official Syrian news agency SANA reported. The children were on an excursion off the port of Latakia. Rescuers saved 19 other children and took them to hospital. A search was underway for those missing, SANA said. The agency did not say how many people were on board the boat when the accident happened.

Suspected thieves lynched in Morocco

RABAT (AFP) — Two men were stoned to death by an angry crowd after being caught stealing from shoppers at a market, the Moroccan news agency MAP reported late Friday. Local officials at Fkih Ben Salah in the high Atlas tried to intervene but they were too late to save the two robbers, one of whom died at the scene and the other in hospital, MAP said.

Russia, Turkey to boost military ties

MOSCOW (R) — Russia and Turkey may "sharply" raise their level of military cooperation in the near future, ITAR-TASS news agency said on Friday. TASS said the possibility was discussed in talks between Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets and visiting Turkish Defence Minister Mehmet Gohlhan. The agency did not give details. The European Parliament condemned human rights abuses in Turkey on Thursday and called on European Union governments to follow Germany's example and cut off military aid to Ankara. Germany suspended arms shipments to Turkey earlier this month after allegations that weapons supplied by Bonn were used to fight separatist Kurds in southeastern Turkey. TASS quoted Mr. Gohlhan as saying Turkey was ready to discuss the possibility of Russian participation in constructing several small nuclear power stations in Turkey. Mr. Soskovets said Russia was ready to consider construction of a gas pipeline going through Turkey and the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

16 feared drowned during Egyptian school outing

CAIRO (AP) — Fifteen elementary-school pupils and a chaperone disappeared and apparently drowned Friday when they went for a lunchtime swim during a holiday beach outing. Police suspected the victims may have been killed by waves churned up in the Mediterranean Sea by high seasonal winds. None of the bodies were recovered, but authorities said searches would continue. The accident happened at Baltim Beach, near a lighthouse on a spit of land 175 kilometres north of Cairo at the northern tip of the Nile river delta. The victims were among 62 children aged 6-12 and three adults spending Friday at the beach. The party was from a provincial school near the beach. Police said the man who disappeared was the father of one of the 15 missing children.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Le Monde Est A Vous
18:00 News in French
18:15 Fast Pas Réviser
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 You Bet Your Life
20:55 Zero One
21:15 Stolen Lives
22:00 News in English
22:30 Island Son
23:10 The Upper Hands

PRAYER TIMES

04:30 Fajr
05:37 (Sunrise) Duha
12:34 Dhuhur
16:12 Asr
19:14 Maghrib
20:36 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweileh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637460
De la Salle Church Tel. 461757

Terrace Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assuan International Church Tel. 625266
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Fine weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 11 / 21
Aqaba 20 / 32

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Deserts 10 / 24
Jordan Valley 17 / 29

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 23, Aqaba 34 Humidity readings: Amman 35 per cent, Aqaba 22 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaydeh 736011
Dr. Khalid Asfour 666873
Dr. Fakher Bebeida 663412
Dr. Adnan Zoghbi 891409
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asoma pharmacy 637055
Najrookh pharmacy 626762
Al Salam pharmacy 630730
Yasoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660
Najrookh pharmacy 626762
Najib pharmacy 847632

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Dr. Ghaleb Zawaydeh 736011
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Dr. Adnan Zoghbi 891409
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asoma pharmacy 637055
Najrookh pharmacy 626762
Al Salam pharmacy 630730
Yasoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660
Najrookh pharmacy 626762
Najib pharmacy 847632

ZARQA:
Dr. Randa Shahin 995710
Khalaf pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 630730
Public Security Department 605800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 891611/15
Amman Municipality 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (Directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power

Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53300
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53300

HOSPITALS

ADJMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Alkhalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Jabal Amman Maternity 642816
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeidan 6641714
Shmeidan Hospital 7771013
University Hospital 843845
Al-Mushtaq Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Ab-Abi, Abdali 6641646
Italia, Al-Mutajir 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Assal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Palestine, Shmeidan (09)980560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)989990
IBER:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (09)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Bangkok (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
09:00 Jeddah (RJ)
10:00 London (RJ)
10:15 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:00 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
17:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:00 Vienna (RJ)
18:45 Brussels (RJ)
18:55 London (RJ)
19:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:55 Athens (RJ)
20:30 Vienna (RJ)
21:00 Rome (RJ)
21:15 Rome (add) (RJ)
21:30 Frankfurt, Rome (RJ)
06:45 Aqaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:25 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:25 Moscow (SU)
19:45 Larnaca (CY)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

0

Minister briefs Cabinet on Middle East water meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Cabinet Saturday listened to a report by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Tala' Al Hassan on Jordan's participation in a Middle East conference on water issues held in Muscat on April 5.

The conference, sponsored by the United States and Russia, was part of the multilateral talks launched within the framework of the Arab-Israeli peace process in October 1991.

Jordan was represented by Ali Ghazzawi, an observer status only in the Kingdom's decision to link its return to the peace process to the lifting of the siege on Aqaba.

Mr. Ghazzawi had told the meeting that he could not support or oppose the decisions taken at the meeting before consulting with the Jordanian government, but later announced that he was withdrawing his statement to help the participants reach a resolution, according to a Cabinet statement.

Earlier reports said that the meeting reached consensus on several concrete proposals for cooperation in water conservation, the use of the existing resources and the introduction of modern methods to help reduce tensions that could arise due to water issues.

The statement said that the Council of Ministers set up a six-member committee to conduct a study on the areas where part of the railway passes through the Amman region.

The committee, which comprises representatives of the ministries of transport, planning, tourism, awqaf, social development, and municipal affairs, would work out a set of plans and present their findings to the Cabinet at a later date.

In addition, the Council of Ministers listened to reports by a number of Cabinet members on the outcome of their tours in several regions. The ministers conveyed demands and requests made by the local inhabitants and local councils.

Britain calls siege on Aqaba 'excessive'

ACC chief tells visiting British trade delegation future joint ventures require foreign equity share

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The United Kingdom feels that the current U.N. enforced naval blockade of Aqaba should be modified, said British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Hinchcliffe Saturday at the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC).

"My government has felt for some time that the blockade is excessive, and that Jordan is suffering as a result," said Mr. Hinchcliffe. "We would like to see a change in the method of how the U.N. regulations are enforced."

"As well, British exports to Jordan have suffered as a

result of this blockade," Mr. Hinchcliffe said at the ACC meeting with a visiting commercial delegation of the South of England Exporters Association (SEEA).

Mr. Hinchcliffe spoke after ACC President Mohammad Asfour emphasised to the ambassador and the SEEA delegation Jordanians' sense of indignation and frustration towards the blockade, and said that since it had begun, "some 1,800 ships have come to Aqaba, and not one ship was found in violation of the U.N. resolutions."

Members of the ACC also said that more ways should be found to address the vastly unequal trade balance between the two nations.

Whereas England exported JD 127.9 million worth of goods and services to Jordan in 1993, according to available statistics, Jordanian exports to England totalled a mere JD 2.5 million in the same period.

The ACC suggested an increase in joint venture projects between Jordan and Britain to the SEEA delegation as a means towards alleviating the current situation, but Mr. Asfour cautioned that "we have suffered before in such programmes."

At times in the past, he explained, foreign partners in such joint ventures had made only minimal equity investments in the projects and

then, partially into the projects' execution, "they got squeezed and ran away."

"Now, we feel that any foreign partner in a joint project in Jordan must have an equity investment in it," in order to guarantee a certain level of commitment on their part, he said.

Mr. Asfour also said that British food exporters had apparently faced some difficulty in their business with Jordan lately because of the current toughening of Jordanian food and drug surveillance.

"Maybe we are too cautious about these things," Mr. Asfour said. "Still, it is better to be too cautious than

not enough."

He also told the delegation that until a comprehensive peace plan was worked out between Israel and all of its neighbours, Jordan had no plans to withdraw from its participation in the Arab commercial boycott of Israel.

Mr. Hinchcliffe told the ACC group that Britain was currently working on drawing up a number of mutual tax agreements with Jordan which would add to facilitating trade between the two countries.

The SEEA delegation arrived in Amman Friday evening for a visit to Lebanon, and will stay in Jordan until April 26.

JCO considers another option for farmers to pay back debts

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian farmers, particularly Jordan Valley farmers, continue to be indebted by about JD15.5 million to the Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO) despite the organisation's plan to reschedule the debts, offer other incentives and write off part of the interest on the related loans, according to Jamal Bedour, JCO director general, so the JCO is considering another option, he added.

The JCO had offered the farmers, some of whom have debts dating back to the 1970s, tempting repayment plans over a 10-year period, said Mr. Bedour. But, he said, unfortunately some farmers are still unwilling or unable to pay back their debts.

Dr. Bedour told the Jordan Times that at least 90 per cent of the indebted farmers have either paid or started to repay the loans, but the rest, of whom 60 per cent live in the Jordan Valley, are still reluctant.

He said the JCO is now contemplating a new repayment plan whereby the JCO would contact the concerned farmers and ask them to present their own plans for repayment which would be accepted by the JCO.

Should the farmers still not respond, he said, the JCO would be forced to take legal action through the courts and courts who would seize farmer's properties and sell them at auctions in order to pay off the debts.

Dr. Bedour said the loans were made from the deposits of cooperative societies which were kept in the JCO bank and as such, he added, these funds are now being re-claimed by their rightful owners.

Referring to the agricultural cooperative societies' contributions to the national economy, Dr. Bedour said that they provide 50 per cent of the total food production in the Kingdom, especially eggs, milk and table salt, and the cooperatives own 36 per cent of the total number of cattle and 11 per cent of the sheep in the country.

Asked about the JCO's assistance to the cooperatives, Dr. Bedour said that the organisation continually provides farm equipment, fertilisers, pesticides, seeds and animal feed for JD2 million annually at subsidised prices to encourage production.

Referring to the most recent development project, Dr. Bedour said that the JCO last year embarked on a five-year pasture development plan which entails maintenance of 50,000 dunums in the wildlife reserves, planting 20,000 other dunums with trees and shrubs and drilling 30 water wells.

Visiting Lebanese minister urges technical education

AMMAN (Petra) — Lebanese Minister of Technical Education and Vocational Training Hassan Izzeddin Saturday criticised Arab countries for focusing on domestic affairs and ignoring issues common to the Arab nation.

Addressing the opening session of a six-day international seminar on technical education in the Arab World in the 21st century, Dr. Izzeddin said that the main dangers and challenges facing the Arab nation as a whole are represented in the confrontation with the Israeli enemy and the failure of all educational projects in the Arab countries.

Citing Lebanon as an example, Dr. Izzeddin said that his country's education and vocational training programmes have so far failed to link training with Lebanese economic needs, adding that the country lacks the concept of dealing with pan-Arab issues.

The meeting was addressed at the outset by Minister of Higher Education Saeed Tell who depurised for His Royal Highness Crown Prince, Hassan, the Regent.

Underlining the role of vocational and technical training in economic life, Dr. Tell said that the Kingdom's 51 community colleges have supplied the market with a significant number of badly needed technicians and skilled labourers.

The Ministry of Higher Education contributed towards these colleges' success by helping them create training programmes for students in medical and engineering professions, computer graphics, printing, commerce and agriculture, said Dr. Tell.

But, he said, rapid developments in education and vocational training have necessitated special requirements for more qualified personnel to meet the needs of the labour market and to contribute more efficiently to production needs.

Suleiman Awad, who represented UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) at the meeting, outlined his office's contributions to the Arab World's vocational training projects.

The meeting, organised by the Arab Federation of Technical Education, is attended by delegates from 11 Arab countries who will review 45 research papers submitted by 13 countries, three international organisations and five Arab institutions.

The organisers said that Arab vocational training and technical education, training of Arab women and modern trends in technical education would be the main features of the discussions.

Earlier, the Lebanese minister had a meeting with Abdullah Oweidat, the acting minister of education, and reviewed educational cooperation between Lebanon and Jordan.

Dr. Izzeddin listened to a briefing on Jordan's educational plans.

The Lebanese minister, who is on a four-day visit to Jordan which started Friday evening, will tour several educational institutions in the Kingdom.

First mining conference opens

Government considers establishing mineral holding company — minister

AMMAN (Petra) — The government is contemplating the establishment of mineral holding company that would take charge of the utilisation and marketing of undeveloped mineral deposits in the Kingdom, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Walid Asfour announced Saturday.

Addressing the opening session of the First Jordanian Mining Conference at the University of Jordan, the minister said the government is also contemplating the establishment of a new mining industry based on locally-produced raw materials.

Dr. Asfour was addressing an audience of 300 engineers and specialists in geology, engineering and mining from Arab and foreign countries gathered to review 70 working papers dealing with Jordan's geology and mineral resources, oil and gas explorations and development of mining industries.

Referring to oil and gas finds, the minister said that Jordan has made important natural gas discoveries in Al Rishah district which are currently exploited to produce electricity, and oil exploration is continuing.

The ministry is planning to establish a national company in order to take charge of oil exploration in the Kingdom, said Dr. Asfour.

Despite the limited mineral resources of the country, the mining industry has been one of the main pillars of the Jordanian economy, providing revenues of nearly JD477 million in 1992, the minister said.

Underlining the importance of raw materials and minerals for industry, the minister said that his Majesty King Hussein has been directing successive governments to carefully consider the mining industry in their economic development plans and to intensify exploration for new minerals in Jordan.

Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) President Luthi Shubert and the head of the JEA Geology Department Mohammad Abu Taha both made speeches calling for the utilisation of local mineral resources in the manufacture of finished industrial products so as to reduce dependence on imported products.

Among the topics to be reviewed at the three-day meeting is the Arab World's consumption of minerals, factors that cause landslides inside the mines, the future of the potash mining industry, seismological activity in the Gulf of Aqaba and earthquakes expected in Jordan or in the neighbouring regions.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

- King receives cable from Arafat**
AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received a cable from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat congratulating him on the success of his surgery. The King was operated on his left ear in London Thursday. Mr. Arafat wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness. King Hussein received similar cables from Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi and Director of the General Intelligence Department Lieutenant General Mustafa Al Qaisi.
- Price Ra'd meets with Islamic republics teams**
AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'den Zeid met at the King Abdullah Mosque Saturday with heads of delegations from the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union who attended celebrations marking the end of restoration work on the Dome of the Rock. The Prince reviewed Jordan's endeavours to safeguard the holy places in Jerusalem and discussed with the delegations exchanges of scholarships for student studying Arabic and religion.
- Minister opens building materials exhibit**
AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour Saturday opened the Fourth Jordanian Exhibition of Building Materials which displays samples of products by 60 local Arab and international firms. The exhibition, which is held at the International Fairs Centre at Marj Al Hamam, has been organised by Hikmat International Establishment in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing. In addition to building materials, the exhibition displays tractors, pneumatic drills, and other heavy machinery used in construction. Among the foreign countries involved in the exhibition are Turkey, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia. The organisers said that many of the participating firms plan to engage local agents to market their products or launch joint investment schemes.
- Jordan, Pakistan discuss cooperation**
AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Pakistani officials opened a meeting Saturday to review prospects for promoting trade, joint investment, industry, agriculture, technology, higher education, health and communications. The two sides reviewed progress in Pakistani-Jordanian cooperation in some of these fields over the past years through the help of specialised committees set up for this purpose.
- Workshop on agricultural extension services to start**
AMMAN (Petra) — A regional workshop on agricultural extension services is due to open at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel Monday. The workshop, which was organised by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), will discuss the use of water for irrigation and the chemical substances in agricultural production.
- Kingdom to attend agricultural meeting in Bahrain**
AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is to take part in a pan-Arab meeting on agricultural products exchange due to open in Bahrain Monday. The three-day meeting will discuss facilitating the flow of agricultural products among Arab states.
- JUST to hold environmental workshop**
RAMTHA (Petra) — The Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) Thursday will organise a regional workshop on the environment. The four-day meeting will tackle research on ways to protect the environment in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Lebanon carries out execution

(Continued from page 1)

"Long live justice," said Salim Yassin Mohsen, grandfather of Mosleh's victim.

"This execution is a relief for our conscience and for the entire society," said the 60-year-old man, who was in the crowd along with several relatives. "I hope execution remains for good in Lebanon to deter criminals."

The wooden scaffold used in the last previous execution, the 1983 hanging of Ibrahim Tarraf in Beirut's Sanayeh Park, had been dusted off, refitted and shipped to Sidon for the occasion.

Mosleh lost a final appeal for clemency Thursday when President Hrawi ratified the death sentence handed down by a court of law.

He was convicted of the January 1993 rape and murder of Miryam Hassan Mohsen. He had raped the girl, then smashed her head with a rock in an orange grove near the southern port of Tyre, 80 kilometres south of Beirut.

Mosleh's hanging marked the first state-sanctioned execution in Lebanon since 1983 and the 14th since Lebanon gained independence from France in 1943.

There has been no vocal opposition within Lebanon to the death penalty.

"We Lebanese are all for building gallows," said Yasser Adlouini, 23, one of several hundred people who had gathered outside the palace since dawn, hoping to witness Saturday's hanging.

"I have seen several militia executions, but this is the first time I have seen one carried out by the legitimate government."

The government rushed through a law making the death penalty mandatory for premeditated murder and politically-motivated killings. Courts, for the first time since the 1970s, are getting tough with those found guilty of violence crime.

Four people have been sentenced to death this month. Besides Mosleh, they include two Syrian soldiers convicted of murdering two jewellers, and a man who killed three police officers.

Official sources said the Syrians' file had gone to President Hrawi and he was likely to approve their executions soon.

Prosecutors have also demanded the death penalty for 15 Palestinians charged with murdering a Jordanian diplomat in Beirut in January, and five Muslims who tried to blow up a busload of orthodox priests in 1992.

16-year-old missing girl found, but remains in police custody

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Souzan Mustafa, the 16-year-old Jerash girl who was reported missing since March 18, was found in a brothel in Jabal Nuzha on April 14 following a raid on the house, police and family sources said.

In circumstances that are still unclear because of conflicting statements by the girl's relatives and police, the minor was being held by Irbid police and expected to be released to her family's custody today.

According to the girl's father, the family had placed a second advertisement in the newspaper on April 13 and received a call from a person of their daughter's whereabouts. The father then informed police.

The caller told the father that he had seen Souzan in Jabal Nuzha buying chicken. He said the girl looked scared and was looking around as if she was hiding something.

The man said he became suspicious of the girl's behaviour, adding that he recognised her from the published picture in the newspaper, and decided to follow her.

Souzan, the second daughter of Mustafa A., a construction worker who lives in Jerash camp, left home on her own and did not return on March 18.

The family notified all police stations and hospitals in Jerash, and also placed an advertisement in local newspapers with a photo of the girl.

In her testimony to police on April 15, Souzan said she left her home because of family problems, and went in search of work.

A Public Security Department (PSD) official told the Jordan Times that on March 18, Souzan had taken a bus from Jerash to Amman and got off at Abdali station.

He said she went to a coffee shop and asked an Egyptian employee there where she could find a job.

Souzan told police the man helped her find a job, but she later lost it. The youth said she went back to the same man and asked him for another job. Accord g to police the man brought her to the brothel.

A neighbour who, participated with police and family members when they raided the Jabal Nuzha house on April 14, told the Jordan Times that there were at least three men and eight women in the house including Souzan.

"The first person we found was Souzan locked in a bedroom," the neighbour said.

Police, on the other hand, said Souzan testified that she was living willingly in the house.

Police would only confirm the raid, and they would not release the official number of people arrested in the house.

The PSD official said that a government doctor examined the girl and said she had not had sexual intercourse.

"The girl was just escaping some problems in her house, and she only ran away to find work," the PSD told the Jordan Times.

Police Saturday told the Jordan Times that they are keeping the girl in custody until they receive a guarantee from the family that the girl will not be harmed.

"This is a routine we follow in such cases because we had similar cases whereby the father or brother would try to kill his daughter after she was released," the official said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.
- BALLET**
- ★ Ballet performance (Swan Lake, Bolero, Romeo and Juliet) at the main theatre of the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- FILMS**
- ★ Children's video film in German entitled "Zirri-Das Wolkens-Chat" at the Haya Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m. (60 minutes — with subtitles in English).
 - ★ Film entitled "JFK" at the American Centre at 5:00 p.m. (205 minutes).
- EXHIBITIONS**
- ★ Exhibition of women's home-made products (including ceramics, sweets and handicrafts) at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - ★ Exhibition of paintings by artist Bahijah Al Hakim at Alia Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).
 - ★ "Spring Exhibition" of Jordanian industrial products at the World Exhibition Centre, University Road (11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.) (Tel. 847113).
 - ★ American Promotion Week '94 at the Amman International Motor Show, Airport Highway (12:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.) (Tel. 714211).
 - ★ Exhibition by artist Mustafa Al Hallaj at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 687598).
 - ★ Exhibition by artists Alia Ammoura, Dorothy Mango, Hind Naser, Janine Sant, Lucy Mario, Tede Wegelins at Al-Hadith Art Gallery (10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.) (Tel. 819861).
 - ★ Exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348).
 - ★ Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).
 - ★ Exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Jordanian sculptor Samer Tabba. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 56 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funn of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh (Tel. 643251/2).

CONDOLENCES

The American Women of Amman wish to express their sorrow and offer their condolences to the Annab family on the loss of

Jean Annab,
Founding Member and former President of the American Women of Amman and dear friend to all.



DISCUSSING HIGHER EDUCATION: University of Jordan Vice-President for Academic Affairs Mohammad Al Maqousi Saturday meets with the secretary general of the Omani University of Sultan Qaboos, Sheikh Hammad Al Ghafiri and discussed with him means of enhancing relations between the two universities. Mr. Ghafiri Saturday concluded a several-day visit to Jordan at an invitation by the University of Jordan.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.

Established 1975

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Deal that helps peace

THERE IS more than meets the eye in the six-point accord reached Friday between the two military wings of Fatah and Hamas. The deal struck between the two goes beyond security and non-violence issues into political and economic matters that need resolution if the Gaza-Jericho accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is to succeed. With the PLO-Israeli peace talks on the implementation of this first step into Palestinian interim self-rule reaches its final stages, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement needs to reach "peace" with the other Palestinian factions in order to avoid the kind of internecine conflict that has been projected to occur the minute the PLO assumes control of the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

No wonder Fatah hastened to label the accord with Hamas as a political agreement. "I consider it an agreement between Fatah and Hamas, not just the armed wings, because the Hawks (Fatah) are not separate from Fatah and Al Qassam (Hamas) is not separate from Hamas," emphasised Ahmad Hillel, a member of Fatah's Higher Committee on the Gaza Strip. This assessment appears to be right and reflects faithfully the depth and implication of the recent accord.

The full extent and scope of the agreement lends support to this thesis. Article 1 calls for an immediate end to hostile publicity campaigns between the two groups. This is obviously a political commitment of far-reaching implications.

The renouncement of all violent means to resolve the differences between the two groups is also a clear signal that Fatah and Hamas have entered a new phase in their relationship. This relationship seems to fit with recent reports that Hamas accepts a deal with Israel on certain conditions that sound to be in conformity with U.N. Security Council Resolution 242. The Fatah-Hamas deal goes into regulating strikes and urges students to return to school. What is even more interesting in the agreement is the decision to freeze the arbitrary liquidation of alleged collaborators with Israel for one month, by which time the Palestinian police would be in control of parts of the occupied territories. By offering all persons suspected of collaborating with Israel an opportunity to redeem themselves by immediately cutting off all such relationships with Israel, the Fatah-Hamas agreement promises to bring law and order to the occupied territories.

Israel should be relieved instead of worried about this inter-Palestinian development. There is no way that peace and stability can be expected to be maintained in the occupied Palestinian territories without Fatah and Hamas coming to terms with each other. Unfortunately, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is forecasting gloom and doom at the prospect of a lasting deal between the PLO and Hamas. Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid was even more blunt in opposing such a development when he said that "if the PLO makes an agreement with Hamas there will be no agreement with us."

This is absurd. Instead of being paranoid about inter-Palestinian peace, the Israeli side should welcome and promote it. Peace between the Palestinians is (sin qua non) for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Saturday welcomed statements by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who reportedly announced that his government would remove all Jewish settlements in the occupied lands in the event peace has been reached. The statements could be considered as an encouraging step towards ending the deadlock in the peace process, especially as they came a few days before the U.S. Secretary of State is scheduled to visit the region, said the daily. We sincerely hope the statements reflect real intentions which could be soon translated into facts on the ground, it added. In order that such statements could become credible, said the paper, Israel is supposed to back these words with deeds and start erasing the settlements in the occupied lands. The paper said that Mr. Rabin, before any one else, realises that the settlements constitute a time bomb ready to blow off any minute and destroy chances for peace. Therefore, it is incumbent on his government to act now and defuse the danger.

AL DUSTOUR daily described as an encouraging step reports about the agreement concluded between the Palestinian resistance groups: Fatah and Hamas. Welcoming the move, the paper said that it is high time for the two groups to join hands and work together towards achieving the same objective. The six-point agreement would open the way for the achievement of the aspired Palestinian goals and would deeply satisfy the Palestinian masses who continue their struggle for liberation, added the daily. It is natural to see differences in views over the resistance programmes between the two groups, but this could be smoothed over for the sake of achieving the common objectives, and it is important for the two sides to find appropriate ways to avert any confrontations as those witnessed recently, continued the paper. It said that the present stage in the Palestinian struggle is crucial and very sensitive and does not tolerate any conflict on the domestic front.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Faneh

Medical insurance: a prescription for bankruptcy

IF YOU want to lead a country to unnecessary waste of resources and bankruptcy, simply start a comprehensive medical insurance scheme for all the people. Such grand schemes broke the back of rich countries like Britain and the United States. They have the capacity to eat up to 10 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and cause heavy losses, because they normally result in doubling the cost of medical care due to waste, exploitation and malpractices by patients on one hand and doctors and hospitals on the other. Waste and mismanagement should be expected in any project conducted by public sector mentality.

It is surprising that the draft law of medical insurance, and the related by-laws and regulations, which took the Ministry of Health six months to formulate, have reportedly cleared the council of ministers in 15 minutes, after which they were referred to the Legal Bureau, a step which means that the council of ministers has approved the project in principle, and that the case has been reduced to a matter of legal wording. This phenomenon casts doubt on the credibility of the council of ministers probing of issues and the process of decision making, despite the claim of a new spirit in the manner of collective responsibility and decision making by the council under Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali. If the annual budget of the state can be approved in one short session, and the medical insurance project can be passed without being challenged, we can simply conclude that something is seriously wrong in the method of making crucial decisions by the government.

It seems that the council of ministers is still under the impact of food and medicine crisis which was raised by the Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas several months ago, which at the time created waves but later went with the wind. That complex may explain the immediate approval of a complex and very costly project which was brought to the fore and killed more than once in the past. The council is apparently ready to approve any project or draft law submitted by Dr. Malhas so that no one can accuse the prime minister and other ministers of blocking the initiatives of the minister who does not lack

courage, imagination and willing to change the status quo. At the outset, we should make the point that the project as presented violates the laws of the country. Medical insurance, if needed, is the responsibility of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) which did not yet start implementing it because it found it unfeasible financially.

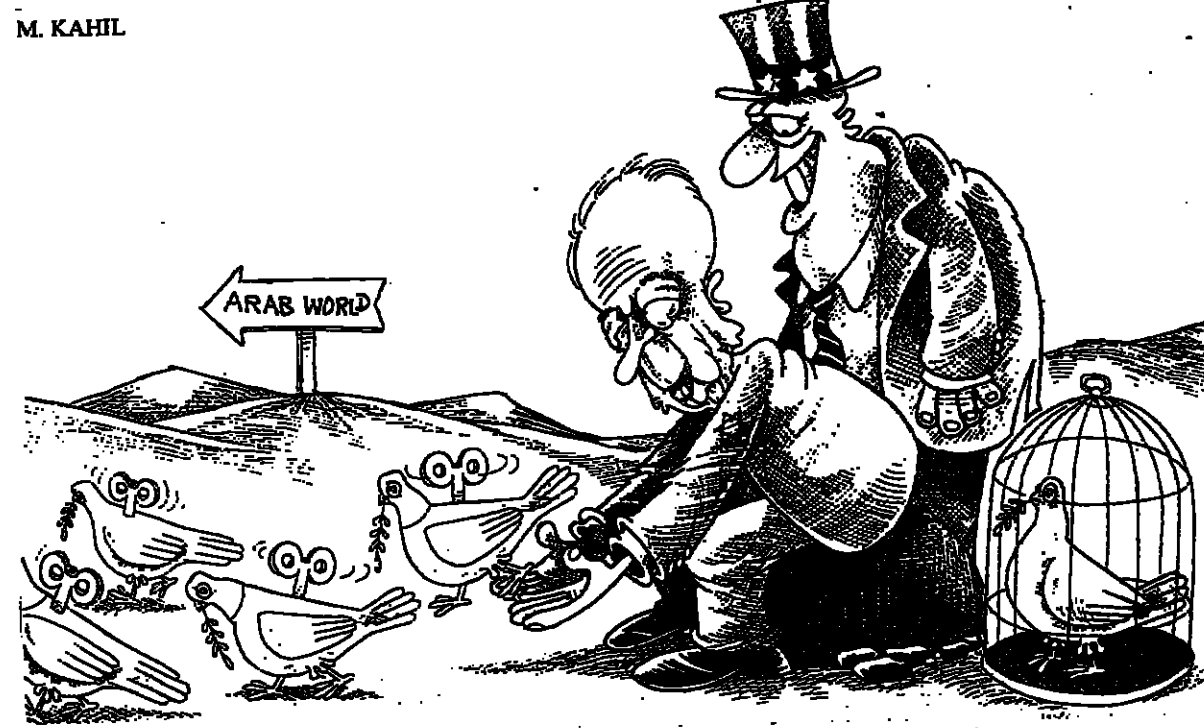
On the other hand it is very strange that the government passed a huge project, like comprehensive medical insurance, without conducting even a simple exercise to calculate its costs. When we asked the minister of health about the cost, he admitted that, "on purpose, no cost was calculated... because if we define the cost of the project it will never see the light."

However, some sources close to the ministry of health estimated that the cost will be in the order of JD 80 million if everything went according to plan. But this figure may double as a result of unavoidable waste and exploitation. The question is who will pay the inflated cost of medical insurance, and what is the source of financing if the Treasury already has a huge deficit to cover by increasing taxes and reducing costs.

The government claims to have a policy of leaving the private sector to operate in all areas of production and services if it is ready and willing to take the responsibility. Yet the government showed willingness to nationalise medical services. This is a socialistic decision which is easy to make, but is very difficult to unmake in the future, just like the unfortunate decision to introduce food subsidies in order to solve a passing problem, which became a permanent burden which we cannot get rid of except with social political pains and over a long period of time.

Bankruptcy is not the only outcome of the national medical insurance scheme. Another result is the drop in the standards of the medical service, which will push many to travel abroad for medical treatment. The medical sector, which is in the process of becoming a centre of excellence in the Arab World and an exporting activity, will in no time decline in quality and become an importing activity which our overburdened economy cannot afford and our hard-pressed budget cannot tolerate.

M. KAHIL



LETTERS

Television looks to the future

To the Editor:

THE ARTICLE by Mr. Rami Khouri (Jordan Times, April 19) about the future of the media in Jordan prompted me to reflect on the recent British experience of new directions in broadcasting.

Everyone knows the BBC and the high standards it set up and continues to uphold, so that the introduction of commercial television in the 1950s was at first resisted in many quarters. However, fears of a degradation in standards proved to be largely unfounded, chiefly due to the existence and powers of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), whose job it was to assure that rampant commercialism on the American model did not take over, and that money-interests or government pressure did not bring about political bias. While the situation in Jordan is plainly very different, in that only state-run television is involved, the relative success of the IBA may be taken as an example of how effective such a body can be.

The situation changed again in the 1980s, when a second commercial channel was set up, Channel 4. This had a different method of bringing in new sources of finance, without jeopardising independence or quality. Instead of being a large monolithic body with many regular employees, Channel 4 had a staff of commissioning editors, whose job it was to contract a wide diversity of private companies to produce programmes of all kinds. These were subject to the same quality-control by the IBA as the programmes on the first commercial channel. The model has worked so well administratively that several European countries — most recently Denmark, have set up channels on similar lines.

But it was the popularity with the public — the artistic success — of Channel 4 that took many people by surprise. For what the new, independent producers brought with them was a more diverse, original creative vision. Many of them young and idealistic, operating from very small offices and studios, they gave TV a new image, closer to many younger, or better educated people's view of life.

This success has another source, however, which does appear to me to have a particular relevance for Jordan. The small independent production companies working for Channel 4 could not simply look to the home market for the funds to finance their enterprises. They had to take advantage of the expanding European market that developed with the European Community (EC). The EC, with great foresight, has provided many sources of funding to enable programme makers to set up co-productions with other countries in Europe. Out of this system have arisen many programmes which are not purely local, but take account of the experience of other European nations. This created a freshness of vision through the bringing-together of different assumptions about art and life.

The European Community is now, through a scheme called Med Media, extending their funding operations to cooperative ventures that take in the member countries of the community and their neighbours to the East and South of the Mediterranean. Jordanians will be involved in at least five of the Med-Media projects, including several involving print journalism, and a number of films.

My own experience of the operation of these schemes is confined to Views of the Holy Land, a documentary drama about the Middle Eastern journey of the Scottish artist David Roberts, which is being produced by Jordan Television and the British company Transworld. As the scriptwriter for this production, I have already found my own attitudes challenged and developed by the views of the Jordanian participants: the

Nabil-Hisham Theatre Company. In this sense, the production is already a cooperative creation, while Jordan TV's aim to surround the drama with a studio-discussion about Roberts, and what he means to Arab admirers of his work, completes the process.

It would, however, be contrary to the spirit of the operation if the work stopped there. Douglas Lowndes, the producer from Transworld in charge of coordinating the work on the British side, will use his time in Jordan throughout the shooting and editing period in June and July to discuss with Jordanian writers, film-makers and broadcasting officials how the coproduction process started with Views of the Holy Land can be continued and expanded in future years. Hopefully any future development would incorporate more of the kind of training schemes of technicians and other TV personnel that a rapidly-changing industry requires, and which are being initiated with the present project.

What does all this mean in the wider context of the crisis in the media to which Mr. Khouri refers? As a Londoner with only a limited knowledge of Jordanian affairs, I cannot tell whether the Channel 4 model, so admired in Europe, has anything real to offer in the current situation. But I do know from my experience as a scriptwriter that exposure to other cultures is nearly always fruitful in the artistic sense and I hope very much that schemes like Med-Media will continue to facilitate it for all of us.

Susan Bennett,
London.

Mostly wrong

To the Editor:

IN REFERENCE TO Mrs. Woodward letter to the editor (Jordan Times, April 7) I must confess that some parts were well illustrated and beneficial while the other parts were minimally appreciated to the readers, precisely to me.

To be candid, I commend Mrs. Woodward's effort for pointing out the errors in the series of "End of a Brave Man", ranging from poor subtitles to wrong spelling, poor timing, poor English usage and letters left out. We hope JTV Channel 2 will pay attention and correct these lapses in future programmes.

On the other hand, I should not fail to express how egoistic Mrs. Woodward's references were when she emphasised on the "prime time" given to African football matches in addition to uninteresting Arab series subtitled in English and she went on to exhibit parochialism by saying that most foreigners that live in Jordan are women of American nationality married to Jordanians and that nearly all of them dislike sports and hate football generally. I wonder if JTV Channel 2 was made specially for American women that hate sports. And also, I'm surprised how she got the data of foreigners living in Jordan and gave the overall conclusion that they are mostly American women. Perhaps she must have wanted all the programmes aired on the foreign channel to suit her and fellow American women. I must bring to her attention that maybe there are other nationalities living in Jordan, which includes Europeans and Africans.

I feel that foreign programmes are not restricted to Jordanians who speak and understand English. Mrs. Woodward should bear in mind that one man's meat is another man's poison. The fact that she hates the programmes doesn't mean that other foreigners or citizens hate it too. She should thus refrain from generalising her personal feelings to others.

As far as I am concerned, Mrs. Woodward was speaking for herself not for other viewers.

Lucky Lansky,
Amman.

Afrikaners' shrine faces wind of political change

By Francis Mdlongwa
Reuter

PRETORIA — A colossal symbol of white dominance and black defeat looms over the South African capital, but for how long?

The granite and marble shrine built by powerful Afrikaner rulers 45 years ago now faces an uncertain future in the new South Africa, where critics mock it as resembling a crematorium or pop-up toaster.

The Voortrekker Monument, holiest of holy places for South Africa's Dutch descendants known as Afrikaners, was born in the age of apartheid and may die with it when unprecedented all-race elections this month bring black rule after 350 years.

Outside, a white signpost proclaims: "Visitors must be suitably dressed. Adults with bare feet, ladies wearing shorts and gentlemen wearing sleeveless vest-type shirts will not be admitted. No animals and no edibles allowed."

A few metres further on, another signpost tells visitors to observe absolute silence.

Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC), widely tipped to win the April 26-28 elections, has already criticised South Africa's lack of shrines commemorating past black political giants such as King Shaka, warrior-founder of the Zulu nation.

The Movement's secretary-general, Cyril Ramaphosa, says an ANC-led government, likely to take power by May, will build "Heroes' Acres" to rebury activists who died fighting apartheid.

Another ANC official, Wally Serote, says no decision on the future of shrines such as Voortrekker has been taken but their place in history should be revised.

To the Afrikaners, the Voortrekker symbolises sacrifices of war waged by a small band of men and women in the 1830s.

Afrikaner settlers in the Cape trekked into the interior to establish a homeland and bring "civilisation" to what they regarded as barbaric blacks.

Afrikaners see biblical inspiration for the incursion but to black it was an invasion and humiliation.

Luthe Bezuidenhout, shrine superintendent for 15 years and himself an Afrikaner, spoke of a need to keep the monument after the landmark polls.

"I believe that there is room for all of us — and for monuments such as this one — in our country," he said. "I can't change history. I can't change the fact that I am a white man in black Africa. I have nowhere to go. People will have to live with it if they don't want me here," he added.

His almost tearful wife Freda stood by as the two ushered visitors into the cube-shaped shrine.

A Pretoria secretary and Afrikaner visiting the monument said: "I don't know what will happen to it and the statue of (founding Afrikaner nation leader) Paul Kruger in Pretoria's Church Street."

"Admittedly the past was cruel to blacks but I hope they realise that this building is part of our history, our heritage. We have so many problems — creating jobs and building schools and hospitals and ending our endemic political violence — that it would help if the new government focused on these."

In neighbouring Zimbabwe, which won independence from Britain in 1980 after a guerrilla war by blacks against white settlers President Robert Mugabe's government quickly baulked down virtually all symbols of colonialism.

Ordered statues of Cecil John Rhodes, founder of the nation once known as Rhodesia, destroyed. It renamed all streets, roads and buildings after prominent blacks who led the independence war.

A South African journalist commented: "Obviously Mandela's government would have noted what Zimbabwe did. Even if Mandela's lot don't destroy these shrines — and I think they won't — they will not be the same again. They will lose their exclusivity as the only places holy to South Africans."

Twenty years and still dreaming!

To the Editor:

IN THE early morning sun, Baghdad looked beautiful. The night before I coaxed the receptionist at the now famous Al Rashid Hotel to give me a "room with a view". With the sun not fully out, the lighted buildings, the big green gardens were serene... I almost wept.

More than 20 years ago, I returned to Amman, my Arab home. My heart full of a dream... I close my eyes and see the map of the Arab World and see me driving my family... American style... for the weekend to Damascus, to Beirut and perhaps (yes in 1973), I also dared dream, to my second Arab home Jerusalem. If the vacation were longer, I dared even fly at a moment's notice with no preplanning to Baghdad, Dubai, Cairo and Riyadh.

Twenty years on... I still have a dream. But now I am alone. Like a dinosaur I am obsolete. After 20 years of Arab agony, we are at long last offered two new border checkpoints... Jaza and Jericho.

Najwa Khuri-Bulos, M.D.,
Jordan University Hospital,
Amman.

A 'thin, tired' dinar

To the Editor:

JORDANIAN SMALL denomination banknotes are the most used exchange medium to settle all kinds of payments and conduct financial transactions. Yet, while these half-dinar, one-dinar and five-dinar banknotes are supposed to be of a special, durable type of paper because of intensive circulation, they usually get worn out only months after their issuance from the mint.

Beyond the fact that they are thinner, one cannot exactly specify the difference between the new prints of paper money and the old banknotes, some of which, though primed long time ago, are still in circulation and in better condition than the newly issued currency. Even bank cashiers, who work with money six hours a day, cannot help saying that the quality of the new banknotes is poor.

Within weeks after releasing the new prints, small denominations seem to fade, lose smoothness and crispness and crease. Months later, they are so worn out and taped all over really are.

People realise that money has lost much value in recent years, but do not use to be reminded of that fact every time the "thin", "tired" dinar passes through their fingers. The to its old paper quality.

Perhaps the Central Bank will reconsider the specification of our banknotes and, in the process, make our life easier.

Samir Shabbat,
Amman.

Israeli, Palestinian artists join hands to build a bridge of peace

By Rosalind Mandline Murphy

WASHINGTON — Long before the negotiators got together, a group of Palestinian and Israeli artists decided to break down the barriers that separate their communities and through their creative work, build a "bridge of peace."

They did so with a joint exhibition in 1982 in Jerusalem. Twelve years later, through the many ups and downs of the peace process, the core group is still together. Its most recent joint exhibition, "Building Bridges: Israelis and Palestinians Artists Speak" is on display at the Meridian International Centre in Washington from April 20 through July 17.

Twelve artists from Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank are displaying 46 works in oil, acrylic, and mixed media, as well as drawings, collages, abstracts and sculpture. In an extension of the exhibit, Israeli artist Tamara Getter displays her installation "The Militia Dreams" — a structure that looks like a military fort — at the nearby District of Columbia Arts Centre.

Participating artists vary in age, style and origin, but their purpose for showing together is to project unity. In a statement issued by the artists, they explain their goals:

"Our meetings continue to emphasize the role of culture and art in building bridges of understanding between peoples and in the ability to bypass cultural and intellectual fanaticism from which our area has been suffering."

"The timing of our exhibition purposely coincides with that of peace negotiations in order to add a new dimension to our experience and to emphasize the artists' commitment to peace for the good of future generations."

Noting that the artists also exhibit their work individually and are well-known in their own right, Ariella Azoulay, the show's curator, said the decision to put on a joint exhibition was more political than artistic.

"They will continue to try to show together until the Palestinians have a state for themselves and the occupation is done," Ms. Azoulay, a curator in Tel Aviv, said.

The group first got together in 1981 when progressive Israeli artists expressed their support for their Palestinian colleagues, who were finding it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to

enjoy artistic freedom under a military occupation.

In the 1970s, many Palestinian artists found their works confiscated by military authorities and were forbidden to paint in the colours of the Palestinian flag — red, black, white and green, Sulaiman Mansour, an artist living in Bir Zeit, said.

When one artist in Gaza was imprisoned for six months for creating "political paintings," some Israeli artists "came to us and told us that we should do a protest," Mr. Mansour recalled. In this sense, he pointed out, "the reason for us being together was artistic, because artists were afraid for the fate of other artists."

Their protest translated into the first joint exhibition in Jerusalem in 1982. Since then, the artists have put on at least 10 joint exhibitions in Israel, the occupied territories, Europe and the United States. The artists include: Nabil Anani, Asad Azi, Tayseer Barakat, Amnon Ben David, Taleb Duweik, Moshe Gershuni, Tamara Getter, Pamela Levy, Jawad Mahmud, Sulaiman Mansour, Khalil Rabah and David Reeb.

Just as the peace process has been difficult, so too have been the artists' efforts to present joint exhibitions. In the beginning, the artists could not show in the West Bank and Gaza because of the military censorship, Mr. Mansour recalled. Showing in Israel also had its problems, Moshe Gershuni, an artist from Tel Aviv, added. "We showed once in Haifa and a member of Parliament tore down the paintings. We had many difficulties," he said.

Despite these hurdles, the artists persevered in their commitment to peace and understanding. "We know that working together as artists is really important to make the peace. We have been working since 1981. From that day we had wars in the Middle East all the time, but it didn't affect our work," Mr. Mansour said.

For the Palestinians, the joint exhibitions allow them to showcase their culture and gain recognition of their plight, said Taleb Duweik, a Palestinian artist from Jerusalem.

"Most of the exhibition on the part of the Palestinians stresses on the nationality of the Palestinian culture," Mr.

Duweik said through an interpreter. "As an artist, I am interested in spreading as much as possible of my own culture."

Cooperating with Israeli artists helps to break down barriers between the Palestinians and the Israeli people, he said. When Israelis come to see the joint exhibitions, it is much more than people just coming to see art, he said. For the Palestinians, it means "a kind of recognition of our problem."

Mr. Duweik stressed that for a Palestinian artist, it is impossible to separate art from politics. "We are living in an occupation regime and there is no way to prevent it," he said. His collage paintings on exhibit at the Meridian Centre reflect this mingling of art, culture and politics.

In one collage, one sees the outline of the old city of Jerusalem in the background of a golden window-frame. In this collage, Mr. Duweik explained, he is saying the future of Jerusalem "is not clear, it is blurry." Another collage depicts a woman and man looking upwards to the sky, surrounded by bars. Here, Mr. Duweik said, he is expressing a message about Palestinian cities.

"Their families are waiting for them and looking through the sky, and they can't see them.... The bars represent the jail bars that cannot be broken, forcing the Palestinian people in a corner," Mr. Duweik said. He read the verse he has written in one corner of the collage: "If the people want life, life will be achieved and the bars must be broken."

Mr. Duweik noted that he often paints a golden moon in his paintings, symbolising hope: "With the new moon, there is new hope. Always there is a hope."

An interesting example showing the mingling of art and politics from the Palestinian perspective is Khalil Rabah's untitled piece, that features traditional Palestinian embroidery on a United Nations World and Relief Agency (UNRWA), food aid canvas bag, a reference to the refugee status of many Palestinians.

Israeli artist David Reeb, in a painting that resembles contact paper of photographic negatives, depicts children playing soccer alongside scenes of Israeli soldiers.

Amnon Ben David's paintings are of the Israeli and Arab negotiators sitting at the conference table at the

Madrid peace talks in 1991. Other pieces are more abstract, such as Moshe Gershuni's "From that Day and Later on," which depicts pink and gray puffs of clouds in a scene that evokes a post-nuclear holocaust world.

Clearly, the conflicts in the region pull at these Israeli artists. Tamara Getter, an artist from Tel Aviv, discussed this struggle.

As an artist in Israel, "you are not working for a cause. You are working for your art.... But it is very difficult in this historical moment to do it and not feel this struggle," she explained.

Speaking passionately, Ms. Getter contrasted the lot of Israeli artists to that of Palestinian artists: "Israeli artists have easy access to any information on what is going on in galleries in New York or Paris. They are up to date.... Whereas for the Palestinian artists in occupation, life is very difficult. They have no access."

Furthermore, she added, Israeli artists have facilities, supplies and opportunities to exhibit their work that Palestinian artists do not have.

"Palestinian painters work in terrible conditions.... It is something heroic to be a Palestinian artist in this situation. They want to be artists. They don't necessarily want to be painting slogans," she stressed.

The joint exhibitions call attention to this situation and also give Israeli artists an opportunity to reflect and question their own art and culture, Ms. Getter said.

For Ms. Getter, an understanding of Palestinian culture opens up an awareness of Israel's own cultural and artistic life as a Middle Eastern country: "My feeling is that the Israeli cultural scene is Western in its vision. We are interested in our neighbours in a future Palestinian state. We don't like that Israeli culture is oriented only towards New York. We think it is time to be interested in what is going on around us."

Nancy Matthews, vice president of Meridian International Centre, said this exhibition "illustrates the mission of Meridian House, which is the exchange of people and ideas in the arts in the pursuit of international understanding." She said that while an itinerary for the exhibit is still being worked out, she envisions a two-year tour across the United States.

USA

By Rana Sabbagh

Reuter

AMMAN — Five months after becoming Jordan's first woman member of the Lower House of Parliament, Toujan Faisal has made more enemies than friends.

Her fiery temper, confrontational style and lack of tact have alienated even former supporters. Some say her series of public battles have dealt a severe blow to future political opportunities for women.

"Toujan is committing political suicide because she is too ambitious and wants to change things for the better overnight," said Samir Madani, a U.S.-educated engineer who voted for her in last November's election.

Within weeks of the vote she had threatened the media for what she saw as sexist cartoons. She fought with two conservative deputies and angered even backers with her outbursts in the ensuing debates.

The 45-year-old former TV personality is unbowed, maintaining her abrasive style is necessary to bring improvements to the lives of Jordanians.

"I feel like a scapegoat with many knives pointed at me," Ms. Faisal told a group of men and women evaluating her tenure.

The mother of three, who rose to fame in earlier battles with Islamic fundamentalists over subjects like polygamy, lashed out at the media, government and fellow members of Parliament.

Faisal, who has called parliamentarians "lethargic" on human rights, said she has to teach people the importance of democracy.

"I am being singled out by Parliament and the government because I am investigating public rights issues and cases of misuse of power," she said. "The state-controlled media is only publishing negative things about me."

The elegant blonde wife of a gynaecologist, Ms. Faisal says a confrontational style is needed in a Parliament she sees as pliant and ignoring abuses of power.

Some original backers agree, blaming tribal and religious traditions in a conservative, male-dominated Muslim society for her difficult transition.

"Given the socio-economic and political circumstances and the structure of Parliament, it is a crime to make Toujan bear all the responsibility," said Wael Abu Dalboun of the leading Nationalist political party Al Ahd (Oath).

"To be alone means a lot, in addition to the fact that Faisal and her colleagues have not fully matured in terms of their political and



Toujan Faisal: "I teach discipline to children, I will teach discipline to this House"

DWINDLING SUPPORT

Five months in Parliament, Faisal makes more enemies than friends

democratic experience."

Her election in the first multi-party ballot since 1957 took most people by surprise. It was hailed as a first step toward more political rights for Jordan's two million women.

She won 1,885 votes, taking one of three seats earmarked for Circassians — Muslims who left the Caucasus about a century ago. She was one of only three women who competed with 533 men to fill the 80-seat Lower House.

When she ran unsuccessfully for Parliament in 1989, Muslim militants declared her an apostate, asking in vain for a court to annul her marriage and grant immunity to anyone who shed her blood.

The long-running battle with Islamists, the largest bloc in Parliament, resumed when she took her seat, but she found her once considerable support ebbing away.

Last month, Parliament refused to lift the immunity of a member Ms. Faisal had accused of hurling insults —

and an ashtray — in a clash during a debate on security.

Ms. Faisal, incensed that 59 of 62 deputies present in the 80-seat house opposed stripping Jamal Al Khraishah of immunity, vowed to pursue him in the courts when Parliament recesses and his immunity automatically lapses.

"I teach discipline to children. I will teach discipline to

Upper House of Parliament (the Senate).

But there is concern her breakthrough could be wasted.

"The way in which she manages her viewpoints and any crisis that faces her does not correspond to the requirements of politics and diplomacy," said Asma Khader, head of the Jordanian Women's Union.

"The way in which (Toujan Faisal) manages her viewpoints and any crisis that faces her does not correspond to the requirements of politics and diplomacy," Asma Khader, head of the Jordanian Women's Union.

this House," Ms. Faisal shouted before storming out in protest.

Many political activists and feminists argue the controversy reflects the struggle as politics and society are liberalised. Women are about 12 per cent of the workforce of 550,000. One woman is in the cabinet and two in the

"We even asked her to deal calmly and rationally and to look for solutions, not to escalate crises," Ms. Khader, a leading lawyer and human rights activist, told Reuters.

"But unfortunately, it seems she does not like to listen or to discuss suggestions."

Regent deplores violence

(Continued from page 1)

been kept when Wihdat goalkeeper Nasser Ghandour and defender Yousef Amouri hit each other in an argument over who was to be blamed for a 67th-minute goal scored by Faisal. It was the second Faisal goal against none in the match.

That incident passed without disrupting the match, but Mr. Ghandour was stabbed as he was returning home late in the evening. He was discharged after treatment on Saturday, Al Wihdat Club officials said.

Most of the injuries sustained during the melee at the stadium were superficial. Hospital sources reported a few moderate wounds, but none of them a life-threatening nature.

In an ironical twist, Al Wihdat fans attacked their own club Friday night, causing severe damages. Wihdat camp residents said. The situation in the camp, on the southern outskirts of Amman, remained tense Saturday, but no serious incidents were reported.

Self-rule talks in crucial week

(Continued from page 1)

signed in Washington in September.

Mr. Abed Rabbo said the remaining issues included the extent to which Palestinian law will prevail over Israeli law in the occupied territories.

Other PLO sources, giving details of issues still to be settled, cited such topics as which telephone area codes would be used in the occupied territories.

The size of the areas to come under Palestinian control has still to be fixed, the sources said.

"The problem of the Jericho area will be decided at a summit between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin," one source said.

It was not as if the match was crucial to either side and fan disappointment had led to violence. Al Faisali leads the First Division table by 13 points over Al Wihdat and was assured of the title three weeks ago. Al Wihdat was placed second when another contender, Al Hussein, lost in a match played on Thursday (see round-up on page 9).

An unknown number of fans were arrested at the stadium and its surroundings after Friday's violence in which everything in sight was attacked and damaged. Police officials declined to release any information on the number of the detainees. "Investigations are continuing," said an official.

Isam Arida, director of the Al Hussein Sports City, estimated damages at between JD 7,000 and JD 8,000. Chairs were broken, security fences were torn down, floodlights and toilets were damaged, and the stadium was littered with debris, resembling a battle scene when it was all over, witnesses reported (the match was not carried live on television).

Mr. Arida said repair work was immediately launched. He expected the stadium to be back to normal in two days.

Meanwhile, the Jordan Soccer Federation met under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah to discuss the violence and decided:

— To expel from the federation and bar for life Rabeel Al Awadat of Al Faisali and Al Wihdat's Imad Al Zaghhal.

— To bar three Al Wihdat players, Jihad Abdul Mumem, Samir Bahioun and Ali Mahmoud, from playing in three matches;

— To levy the cost of all damages at the stadium from the two clubs and impose an extra fine of JD 1,000 on Al Wihdat.

To consider as final the 2-0 score of the Faisali-Wihdat match when the violence disrupted its play.

Meanwhile, administrators of the two clubs were holding what was expected to be a reconciliation meeting. A joint statement was expected.

was to ask the PLO leaders to approve agreements concluded between PLO and Israeli negotiators in Cairo and Paris and also those reached between himself and Mr. Peres.

PLO sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Arafat has told senior PLO officials that he expects an agreement to be signed between himself and Mr. Rabin in Cairo on May 2.

A top Israeli negotiator said that Palestinian rule would quickly collapse without a massive cash infusion in an interview published Friday.

Major General Danny Roth-schild, the coordinator of army activities in the occupied territories, said the Palestinians needed three times the Israeli budget to succeed.

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World pays tribute to Nixon

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Clinton said. Nixon has spent much of the last 20 years out of the public eye and his funeral services will be low-key for a former head of state.

His body was taken to an undisclosed funeral home where it will remain until it is flown to Yorba Linda, California, his birthplace, on Tuesday, his office said. His body will not lie in state in the Capitol.

Services will be held Wednesday afternoon at the Richard Nixon Library and birthplace. He will be buried next to his wife, Pat, who died last year.

Mr. Clinton ordered government flags to be flown at half-staff and declared the day of Nixon's funeral a national day of mourning.

Rep. Billy Graham, a longtime Nixon friend, will officiate. Eulogies will be delivered by President Clinton, Senator Robert Dole and California Governor Pete Wilson.

Boris Yeltsin, annoyed when

Nixon met with his opposition leader during a March trip to Moscow, praised his "great political experience." China's official Xinhua news agency called him "an old friend of the Chinese people."

Russian President Boris Yeltsin said he had always valued Nixon's guidance in shaping a post-Soviet Russia.

"I am grieving," Mr. Yeltsin said in a statement Saturday. "I am shocked by the death not only of an extraordinary man but also of one of the greatest politicians in the world."

"His attitude to Russia may not have been love, but it was a special attitude," Mr. Yeltsin said in an interview with CNN. "He took it all to heart. He gave the advice of a wise politician... to which I personally paid a lot of attention."

Just last month Nixon visited Moscow.

In Beijing, where in 1972 Nixon shook hands with Premier Zhou Enlai and symbolically ended decades of hostility between China and the United States, China's top leaders praised the former president

Syria welcomes Rabin comments

(Continued from page 1)

and the West Bank town of Jericho.

The agreement does not prevent continued Israeli settlement for a five-year interim period, and Mr. Rabin has rejected any hint of dismantling settlements, to the extent of ignoring pleas from settlers who are willing to move.

But reports have said that as soon as the Palestinian autonomy is under way, as early as June, Mr. Rabin will set about dismantling settlements in problematic heavily populated Arab areas.

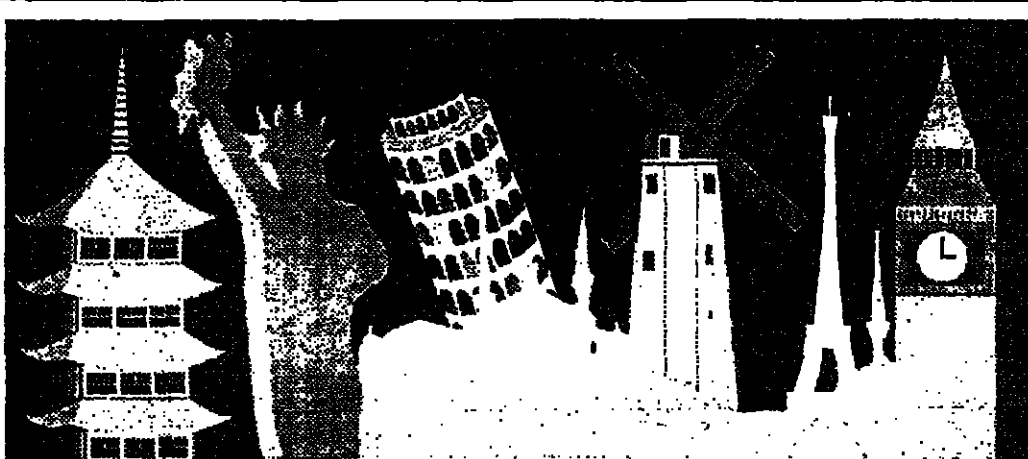
Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal said Friday Israel wanted a future peace accord with Syria to be im-

plemented over 10 years to be sure Damascus did not still harbour hostile intentions.

Israel wanted an accord with Syria to be "implemented over a period of 10 years, while the Syrians only accept a period of three years and the United States envisages seven years," Mr. Shahal told a public meeting in Tel Aviv.

The 10-year period was "necessary to be sure that Syria seriously intends to make peace with Israel."

But Mr. Shahal said an accord must be clinched by late 1995, otherwise it could be jeopardised by Israel's parliamentary elections slated for November 1996.



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Latin America rejects any conditions on trade

UAE to make slick cleaner

DUBAI (R) — U.S. aircraft giant McDonnell Douglas, seeking to invest more than \$100 million in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to offset arms sales, has helped set up a firm in the Arab Gulf state to make an agent for cleaning up oil slicks. A new limited liability company, to be called Fyrezyne Middle East Ltd., is being set up, officials said.

The U.S. company, acting as match-maker, set up the joint venture between UAE businessman Abdullah Ahmad Al Moosa and Arizona-based Ecology Technologies International Inc., which has the patent on the liquid agent known as Fyrezyne.

Kuwait sets big budget for arms — consultancy

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait has earmarked a hefty 500 million dinars (\$1.68 billion) for spending on weapons and military training in the 1994/95 fiscal year starting on July 1, an economic consultancy said Saturday.

The Al Shall consultancy suggested in a weekly economic commentary that this was an excessive level of spending.

"The national budget includes for the first time, under the 'defence upgrading' heading, preliminary estimates of defence expenditures," it said.

"A discomfiting sign is exhibited by virtue of earmarking 500 million dinars for next year."

Al Shall did not say how it obtained the figure, but it is

known to have good contacts with the government.

"Controlling the 1994/95 budget deficit is supposed to be a prime and pressing task," Al Shall said.

The Gulf war-inflated deficit is running at around 2.0 billion dinars (\$6.7 billion) or a third of national wealth as measured by gross domestic product.

A bill enacted this month gave parliamentary approval for the first time to a 12-year, 3.5 billion dinar (\$11.7 billion) programme of spending on major weapons and military training.

The law also consolidates the hitherto secret allocations for arms procurement and military training into the main defence budget — a move that

gives the national assembly authority for the first time to examine them in the annual budget debate.

Major weapons purchases for the small Gulf state's 13,000-strong military have hitherto been off-budget.

Al Shall, a critic of what it sees as the state's tendency towards excessive spending on arms and prestige projects, suggested that money was being spent too rapidly under the programme, which was introduced in that form of an emiri decree in 1992.

"We believe the 1.6 billion dinars (\$5.3 billion) has already been spent or been committed in the past two years, when the proposed expenditures mentioned above

are added to this figure, the total will reach 2.1 billion (\$7.0 billion), or a yearly average of 700 million (\$2.35 billion)," it said.

Al Shall said the yearly average expenditure under the programme ought to be lower, at around 290 million dinars (\$970 million), if the government spreads out its spending of the 3.5 billion dinars in equal annual installments over 12 years.

Diplomats say Kuwait is considering the possible purchase in coming years of 16 attack helicopters, eight fast patrol boats, six missile attack boats, 24 self-propelled howitzers, a multi rocket launch system and some general purpose helicopters.

Sudan's exporters demand better exchange rate

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's government has rejected demands by exporters for the Sudanese pound to be devalued, a Khartoum newspaper said Saturday.

The government-owned Al Ingaz Al Watani newspaper quoted exporters as saying exports were falling because the rate at which the government allows them to convert the dollars they earn into Sudanese

pounds was too low.

The central bank gives exporters 215 Sudanese pounds per dollar while in commercial banks the dollar fetches 400 pounds. On the blackmarket the dollar is worth more than 500 pounds.

Exporters complained their production and transport costs were rising. Some were storing goods rather than exporting them, the newspaper said.

Sabri Mohammad Al Hassan, governor of the Bank of Sudan, said no change in export policies was expected until next year. The rate of 215 pounds to the dollar would stay in force this year, he said.

Sudan's exports have fallen sharply. Last year's exports earned only \$300 million, down from \$800 million about a decade ago.

Emirates airline posts \$20m profit

MANAMA (R) — Dubai's fast-growing airline Emirates made a \$20 million net profit in the year ending March 31, its chairman was quoted on Saturday as saying.

"Until the end of March (1994) Emirates posted a \$20 million profit," Sheikh Ahmad Bin Said Al Maktoum told Al Hayat newspaper in an interview in London.

He gave no comparison figure but the Financial Times newspaper, also based in London, said earlier this year that Emirates made a net profit of \$2.9 million in the year ending on March 31, 1993.

Emirates, one of the world's fastest-growing airlines, is owned by Dubai.

IFC helps Tunisia

TUNIS (R) — The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a world Bank subsidiary, said Friday it was helping to create Tunisia's first merchant bank and an investment fund to boost privatisation and the local stock market.

Jean-Michel Doublet, IFC investment officer for capital markets in Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa, said foreign financial corporations as well as Tunisian firms would be involved in both institutions.

Mr. Doublet said he knew of several U.S. and European investors ready to buy shares on the Tunis Stock Exchange once the small number of listed firms was increased through privatisation, and the Tunisian government clarified procedures for foreign buyers.

Mr. Doublet said the bank would be created "very soon"

after the Tunisian central bank's agreement had been obtained.

One of the bank's main functions would be to advise on privatising state-run companies, he told Reuters after a closed-door seminar involving Western investment companies and Tunisian officials.

Mr. Doublet said foreign companies, including France's Siparex, would invest millions of dollars in Tuninvest International, an investment fund created in a joint venture with the Tunisian private company Tuninvest.

Tuninvest International will invest in local enterprises with the aim of preparing them for listing in the Tunis market.

Foreign companies attending the seminar included London-based Baring Securities Ltd., Citibank N.A., Fleming Investment

India eyes foodgrain exports

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian government is considering exporting wheat and rice for the first time, the head of its biggest grain trading agency said.

"We have surplus stocks of both wheat and rice and one alternative being thought of is to export these foodgrains," said Food Corporation of India (FCI) Chairman R. Narayanan.

Senior food ministry official A.C. Sen said last month India was exploring the possibility of exporting half a million tonnes each of rice and wheat after bumper crops in recent years.

India had foodgrain stocks of 23.56 million tonnes last January, up from 23.52 million

tonnes in December and from 14.18 million tonnes in January 1993, a finance ministry report said last month.

A green revolution in the 1960s, through high-yield hybrid varieties of wheat and rice and mechanised farming techniques, propelled India to self-sufficiency in the following decade.

"So far India was never considered as an exporter of rice and wheat. We need to tell the international market that we have these foodgrains to be exported," Mr. Narayanan said.

Mr. Narayanan said Indian wheat was not competitive in the international market in terms of price, but its rice was.

Several rice exporting countries were not producing the varieties of superfine rice which Indian could supply.

"There is a large potential for it," he said.

He said South East Asian countries and neighbours like Sri Lanka might be interested in Indian rice. Market analysts said the lifting of curbs on rice imports by Japan, Taiwan and South Korea also opened new markets.

Private traders in India are already exporting superfine basmati and non-basmati rice and superior varieties of wheat. In 1992/93 basmati rice exports were valued at 14 billion rupees (\$452 million).

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AMMAN GOLD EXCHANGE

AMMAN SILVER EXCHANGE

AMMAN DIAMOND EXCHANGE

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S. Africa probes pre-poll attacks

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Police said Saturday they were investigating a spate of attacks, including a possible white right-wing bombing of an oil pipeline, four days before South Africa's first all-race elections open.

With black and white leaders staging a final campaign push at the weekend, a blast ripped through a diesel pipeline in the Orange Free State early Saturday after an earlier attack on an election office in the province.

"We are investigating an act of terrorism. It is definitely a charge of terrorism," police Colonel Andre Van Deventer told Reuters from the free state capital of Bloemfontein.

Police said they were also investigating an arson attack early Saturday that damaged the switchboard at a post office to be used as a polling station in the Northern Transvaal town of Nystroom. They had initially reported an explosion.

An explosion Thursday badly damaged the offices of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in the conservative farming town of Hoopstad in the northern Orange Free State.

White rightwingers, who are boycotting the April 26-28 elections and demanding a homeland of their own, have threatened to sabotage the poll, which begins Tuesday and

will end over three centuries of white domination.

Col. Van Deventer said the possibility of a right-wing attack on the oil pipeline, 75 kilometres south of Johannesburg, was under investigation, "but we cannot confirm it at this stage." He said commercial explosives — a hallmark of the right wing — had apparently been used.

Security forces said they were deploying 100,000 police and soldiers to prepare for "any eventuality" during the poll for a National Assembly and nine provincial legislatures and a government of national unity.

African National Congress (ANC) supporters flocked to a soccer stadium in the sprawling Soweto township on the outskirts of Johannesburg to hear Nelson Mandela, president-in-waiting in post-apartheid South Africa.

It was Mr. Mandela's last rally in the country's industrial and commercial hub. He winds up his campaign with a mass meeting on Sunday in Durban in the Zulu heartland of Natal.

"We are here to finally bury apartheid," said one ANC supporter on his way to the Soweto stadium. ANC spokesman said it would be Mr. Mandela's biggest rally in the Johannesburg region.

President F.W. de Klerk was winding up his campaign in Cape Town, while Zulu chief

Mangosuthu Buthelezi — leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party which only entered the elections last Tuesday — was in the Orange Free State.

Police blamed the white right for attacks earlier this year on power installations and offices of the ANC and its allies in Orange Free State and Transvaal.

The ANC, widely expected to win the polls, has told South Africans it will crack down on violence once in power.

The final days of the election campaign have been marked by political broadsides and fears of more conflict in a country where 15,000 people have died in political violence since President De Klerk began dismantling apartheid in 1990.

Police said two people died in overnight political violence in Natal, where a state of emergency is in force.

Mr. Buthelezi Friday raised prospects of new tension with the ANC, saying his Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) would boycott a government of national unity after the election.

"The IFP will win enough votes to take its place in a government of national unity but we will not become part of the government," he told a rally.

An ANC statement called on security forces to act toughly against right-wing sabotage

and intimidation, adding: "Our historic first-ever right to vote is not going to be easily given up, not even in the face of this blackmail. Too much blood has been spilt in order to make this election possible."

Meanwhile, U.S. President Bill Clinton Friday named civil rights leader Jesse Jackson to lead the official U.S. delegation to observe South Africa's first all-race elections.

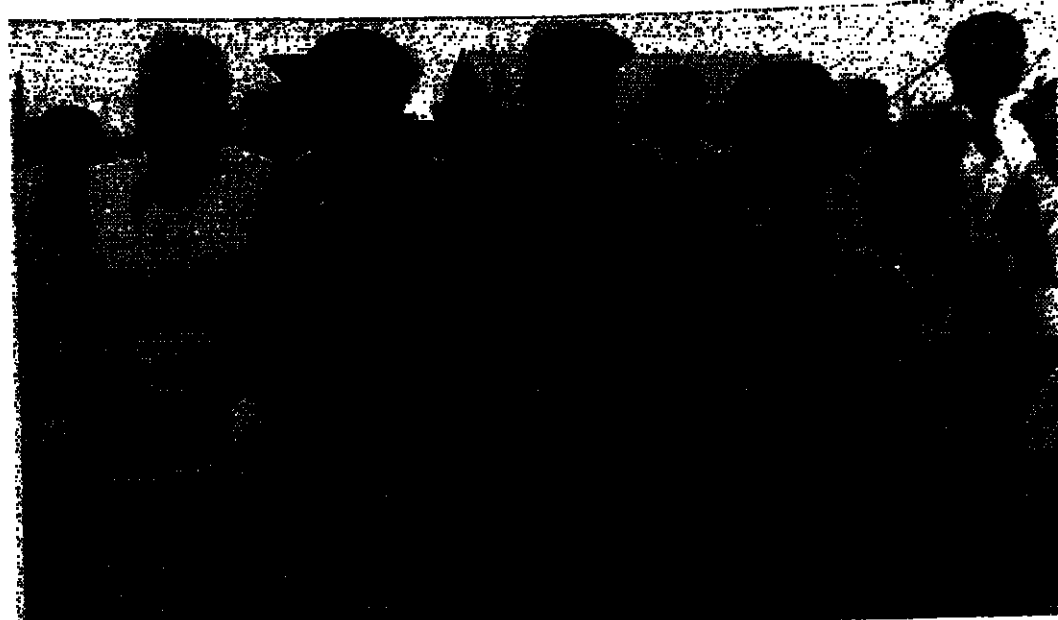
Mr. Clinton praised Rev. Jackson's leadership and commitment to democratic reform in South Africa.

"The world is elated at the prospect of these elections. They are the next step in South Africa's historic path from apartheid to non-racial democracy," Mr. Clinton said.

"Americans have stood by South Africans in their struggle, and we will be steadfast in our commitment to work with all South Africans to build the prosperous, stable and just society that can come in its place," he said.

The delegation was expected to depart for South Africa Saturday and will remain there through the end of the elections.

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said it will have official observer status with the South African Independent Electoral Commission and will observe the polling throughout the country.



South Africa's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters form a war barrier with their shields and chant slogans at an election rally in Thandakanya township of Pietermaritzburg, in the Eastern Transvaal (AFP photo)

U.N. troops scramble out of Rwanda

NAIROBI (R) — U.N. peacekeepers scrambled out of chaotic Rwanda where, amid the bloodshed, aid agencies struggled to get food and emergency medicines to thousands of people fleeing civil war.

A United Nations spokesman said 1,000 peacekeepers would leave the chaotic Central African state by Saturday night.

Their departure leaves about 600 U.N. soldiers who will be reduced within days to the 270 mandated by the Security Council, a spokesman for the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) told Reuters in Nairobi by telephone from Kigali.

Critics of the pullout, such as the Organisation of African Unity and humanitarian groups, say the U.N. is abandoning the thousands of Rwandans it was guarding around a country where tens of thousands have already been killed in ethnic slaughter.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said a medical convoy with 20 staff, including doctors and surgeons, had managed to get through to the embattled Rwandan capital of Kigali from Burundi late Friday.

The convoy was to supply two hospitals in Kigali operating under the Red Cross

emblem and another hospital near the town of Gitarama. The ICRC has around 45 international staff in Rwanda, two-thirds of them in the capital.

A U.N. team to evaluate Rwanda's humanitarian needs was expected to land in Kigali Saturday where according to a military official small arms fire erupted early in the day but ceased later.

The 10-member group is headed by Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Peter Hansen, UN-AMIR officials said.

The U.N. spokesman said the United Nations had sought guarantees from the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and government army units that aid agencies would not be attacked.

He did not say whether the guarantees were given. But he had no word that emergency aid supplies had reached the city.

In Washington, the White House called on the warring sides to agree to an immediate ceasefire and said it was prepared to help efforts to arrange a political settlement of their dispute.

"We call on the Rwandan army and the Rwandan Patriotic Front to agree on an immediate ceasefire and return to negotiations called for and facilitated by the government

of Tanzania," a White House statement said Friday.

It added that Washington was "prepared to participate, as in the past, in renewed negotiations in the context of the Arusha agreement of Aug. 4, 1993." That agreement called for a negotiated settlement and power-sharing between rival groups.

U.N. special representative Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh was heading the U.N. mediation team in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha where the Rwandan forces were due to meet later Saturday for peace talks.

The mass killing, mainly pitting the majority Hutu tribe against the minority Tutsi, started 17 days ago when a plane carrying the Rwandan and Burundian presidents was shot down by a rocket as they were about to land in Kigali.

At the United Nations in New York, a spokesman for Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Friday the U.N. chief would have preferred a beefed-up U.N. operation in Rwanda but realised the Security Council felt differently.

The council voted late Thursday to cut the beleaguered force, once 2,500-strong, to about 270 to help negotiate a truce in the civil war.

Russia, Ukraine to resume talks on fleet

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia and Ukraine said Saturday they were ready to resume stalled talks on division of the Black Sea Fleet, news agencies here reported.

The talks broke down Friday in Sevastopol in the Crimea when Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev walked out during a break, accusing the Ukrainians of moving away from a preliminary accord agreed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kravchuk.

"The negotiations with Ukraine will continue until settlement is reached on all points," a high-level Russian diplomat, who requested anonymity, told the Interfax News Agency.

Under the accord agreed by Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Kravchuk in Moscow on April 15, talks on dividing the fleet were to be completed by April 25. The diplomat quoted by Interfax said, however, that negotiations were sure to continue

beyond that date. He reiterated Moscow's refusal to have the Russian and Ukrainian fleets both based in Sevastopol.

Under the Yeltsin-Kravchuk accord, the Russian and Ukrainian parts of a divided fleet would be based in different ports.

In a statement quoted by the agency ITAR-TASS, the Ukrainian Defence Minister Vitaliy Radetsky said he was "ready to resume the negotiations at any moment."

China frees dissident for treatment in U.S.

BEIJING (R) — China released one of its best-known dissidents for medical treatment in the United States Saturday, just weeks before President Bill Clinton is due to decide whether to extend Beijing's trade privileges.

Wang Jintao, sentenced to 13 years in prison in 1991 on charges of masterminding the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, was taken to the airport where he met his family before leaving the country, his mother said.

"I am very relieved that the government has allowed him to be released on medical parole for treatment in the United States," Ge Yumei said by telephone.

The official Xinhua News Agency, quoting a Justice Ministry official, said merely: "Wang Jintao, who had been in custody, has left for medical treatment abroad after the Chinese judicial authorities released him on bail according to law on account of the conditions of his illness."

Mr. Wang, 35, has been seriously ill with the liver disease hepatitis and heart trouble, though his mother said his present condition was stable.

The case of Wang, who has become internationally known through the efforts of human rights campaigners and his wife, currently in the United States, has been raised by a number of Western governments.

Chief among those has been the U.S., which is trying to press Beijing to improve its treatment of dissidents.

President Clinton must decide by June 3 whether to extend China's most favoured nation (MFN) trading status, the foundation of normal economic relations between the two countries.

He has said he will renew MFN only if China makes "significant progress" on human rights.

Meanwhile, China, warning the United States not to abuse relations, expressed grave concern Saturday over reports President Clinton planned to meet the Dalai Lama, exiled spiritual leader of Tibet.

Love story steals all hearts at film awards

HONG KONG (AFP) — "C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri," an old-fashioned, tear-jerking love story that was the surprise hit of Hong Kong's prolific movie industry, swept the 13th annual Hong Kong Film Awards, winning Best Picture and six other awards.

"Maybe I have more friends among judges this year," director Derek Yee quipped at the gala televised awards ceremony in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Based on a successful stage play, "C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri" broke ranks with the local film industry's vogue for historical Chinese kung fu action features with a sad, romantic tale of a doomed love between a handsome young

jazz musician and his girlfriend dying of cancer. Anita Yuen, 22, the pixie Miss Hong Kong of 1990 who only last year won the Best New Performer Award, collected the Best Actress Award for her role in a film whose Chinese title literally translates as The New Edible Love. Yee was summoned to the stage three times to collect for Best picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay — leaving him in danger of running out of people to thank after expressing appreciation to everyone from his mother to Emcee John Sham. Missing out on the laurels was the film's leading man, Hong Kong's latest heart-throb Lau Ching-Wan, who lost the Best Actor trophy to Anthony Wong for his role as a psychotic cannibal killer in one of the year's most gruesome films.

The Untold Story, The Bride With White Hair, one of several extravagant costume dramas set in ancient China on the nominations list, trailed C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri with three awards.

Painting stolen in Australia found in Skopje

SKOPIJE (AFP) — A painting by the Czech artist Oskar Kokochka, stolen in Australia several years ago, has been found in Skopje, Macedonia Interior Minister Ljubomir Prckovski said. Mr. Prckovski presented the still life work in oils to the press. The painting stolen with seven others from Australia's National Gallery in the 1980s is estimated to be worth between \$250,000 and \$300,000. The thieves are Macedonian-born Australians who were caught trying to sell the painting in Skopje, Mr. Prckovski said. The painting was undamaged but had been cut from its frame with a scalpel.

Medicine shops to get rid of tiger remedies

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's Chinese medicine shops have one week to dispose of all stocks containing tiger products, which have been banned in the territory, the government said Friday. Tiger parts are prized in Asia for their supposed medicinal properties. A three-month grace period allowing Hong Kong shops to dispose of all remaining tiger products expires next Friday. The ban was implemented to bring Hong Kong in line with Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) specifications. Medicines containing rhinoceros parts have been banned in the territory since 1989. About 90 per cent of the territory's Chinese medicine shops have been inspected by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department over the past six months, said the department's assistant director, Frank Lau.

'Pizza man' goes door-to-door naked

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A man claiming to be a pizza deliveryman wore nothing more than a baseball cap as he went door-to-door at an apartment complex. Chad Abrams, 21, was arrested and jailed on charges of public indecency and public intoxication. Mr. Abrams injured himself in the groin while jumping over a fence as he allegedly tried to flee from sheriff's deputies. Sheriff's officials said he was not a pizza deliveryman. They were uncertain whether he was actually carrying a pizza.

"Spring always bring this stuff out," dispatch supervisor Linda Wyland said. "You always get these guys trying to show off what they have."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bossi backs Berlusconi for premier

ROME (AFP) — Media magnate Silvio Berlusconi stepped closer to becoming Italian prime minister Saturday when Northern League leader Umberto Bossi recommended his appointment in talks with President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. Under Italy's constitution, Mr. Scalfaro must hold talks with the leader of political groups and the speakers of the two houses of parliament, before he can recommend who should succeed Carlo Azeglio who resigned as prime minister on April 16. These talks began Friday and are expected to continue until Tuesday. Mr. Bossi said after meeting Mr. Scalfaro that there needed to be controls on Mr. Berlusconi's power. The Northern League needed to have ministers in key positions, he said. The Northern League, Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia and the neo-fascist National Alliance together form the Freedom Alliance, which swept to victory in elections held on March 27 and 28. Mr. Bossi said he had told Mr. Scalfaro Mr. Berlusconi was the only person who could command sufficient parliamentary support to become prime minister and form a government. He added, however, that there was a "fundamental problem of guarantees", given Mr. Berlusconi's "economic power" and his "multiple economic interests."

Bomb blast kills 2 in Thailand

BANGKOK (AFP) — A powerful bomb tore through a railroad station in Thailand's troubled south at midday Saturday as passengers waited for a train, killing two and injuring 30. An emergency room doctor at Mahatma Hospital in the provincial capital of Nakhon Si Thammarat, some 780 kilometres from Bangkok, said two of the injured were children. Reached by telephone from Bangkok, the doctor said the dead were a man and a woman. Of the injured, six needed surgery to amputate mangled limbs, said the doctor, speaking on condition of anonymity. One man lost part of a leg in the blast and the others suffered broken legs, while three people were hemorrhaging. The doctor confirmed the bomb had exploded on the crowded platform of the railway station.

Accord on Volkstaat signed in Pretoria

PRETORIA (R) — The party representing South Africa's white right in next week's elections signed an accord with the ANC and government Saturday promising a fresh look at the idea of a Volkstaat or white homeland after the poll. "This document might be imperfect, but it's a demonstration of a desire to reconcile... the two major indigenous groups of this country," Constand Viljoen, the former armed forces chief who leads the Freedom Front, said after signing the accord. The deal, signed in Pretoria, pledges constitutional provision for any community sharing a common cultural and linguistic heritage — such as the Afrikaner descendants of the first Europeans to settle in South Africa. "Support for the ideal of self-determination in a Volkstaat will be indicated by the electoral support which parties with a specific mandate to pursue the realisation of a Volkstaat will gain in the forthcoming election," the accord said. It pledged further negotiations on setting up a Volkstaat if South Africa's constitutional court ruled that the April 26-28 elections showed there was support for the idea. Votes would be analysed at national, provincial and where possible local level.

S. Korea's Kim to shake-up cabinet

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam is likely to revamp his cabinet next week after the National Assembly approves his pick of a senior strategist for Korean reunification as premier, aides said Saturday. Mr. Kim named Lee Yung-Dug Friday to replace Lee Hoi-Chang, who quit earlier in the day as prime minister in a shock eruption of differences over the scope of prime ministerial power. Mr. Lee Hoi-Chang's resignation revealed a heretofore hidden rift in the leadership of Mr. Kim's civilian government, currently under pressure from Communist North Korea over Pyongyang's alleged development of nuclear arms. "President Kim will fill the post of deputy premier and is likely to reshuffle a number of cabinet posts next week," a presidential aide said. On Monday, the parliament, dominated by Mr. Kim's ruling Democratic Liberal Party, is expected to endorse Mr. Lee Yung-Dug as prime minister, though opposition parties have vowed to vote against him.

Haitians allowed to land in U.S.

MIAMI, Florida (AFP) — A boatload of Haitian refugees stepped onto U.S. soil with everything they owned Friday in a break with the usual U.S. policy of repatriating all boat people from the poverty stricken country. The Coast Guard sailors who brought the 411 Haitians ashore wore rubber gloves when they unloaded the luggage as a precaution against disease. One woman was carried aboard on a litter and hooked up to an intravenous tube. The immigration and naturalisation service began screening the refugees under makeshift shelters on tennis courts. They were intercepted Thursday on a crammed 20-metre (65-yards) wooden boat. The policy about-face came one day after deposed Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in unusually harsh terms, condemned Mr. Clinton's Haiti policy as racist and six U.S. congressional critics were arrested for staging a sit-in in front of the White House.

Cambodian parties agree to new peace talks

PHNOM PENH (R) — Long-stalled peace talks between the Cambodian government and Khmer Rouge guerrillas will get underway in May following a positive rebel response to a new olive-branch initiative by King Norodom Sihanouk.

King Sihanouk proposed a new round of reconciliation talks after the humiliating defeat of Cambodia's army by the guerrillas in Pailin in the west.

"In line with the profound proposal and aspirations of our entire nation and people, I, in the name of the Democratic Kampuchea Party (Khmer Rouge) would like to absolutely support the proposal of Your Majesty the King for a roundtable meeting to achieve peace and national reconciliation," said nominal Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan in a statement dated April 22.

The head of the Cambodian Peoples Party and president of the National Assembly, Chea Sim, also pledged to support the king's peace plan.

"We always follow Your Highness's shining example," Mr. Chea Sim said.

Meanwhile, Khmer Rouge guerrillas are thought to have ambushed a train killing at least five people and wounding 25, a senior Cambodian railway official said Saturday.

The attack occurred Thursday 140 kilometres northwest of Phnom Penh, said Prom Nan, director of the Cambodian State Railways.

"The unidentified gunmen, who were believed to be Khmer Rouge guerrillas, detonated six mines placed on the railroad and opened fire at the train, killing five people on the spot and wounding 25," Nan said.

"Based on previous incidents, I believe it was the Khmer Rouge guerrillas who committed this crime," Mr. Nan said.

WASHINGTON (R) — First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, appearing poised and relaxed, said Friday she did nothing wrong in the Whitewater affair but admitted her inexperience and desire for privacy have made things worse.

In an unusual move for a first lady, the president's wife fielded questions for one hour and 10 minutes during a hastily called news conference in the State Dining Room of the White House.

Mrs. Clinton admitted that her initial opposition to a special prosecutor to investigate the case was a mistake that generated public doubts that she had something to hide.

"I think that is probably one of the things that I regret most and one of the reasons why I wanted to do this (press conference) because I've had to really do a lot of thinking the last couple of months," she said.

She said that "what has helped me in the last couple of

weeks is... my belief that is really a result of our own inexperience in Washington" and not a long-term problem.

Sitting on a wooden chair, the first lady said she knew of no time when money was funnelled improperly from the Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, which later went bankrupt, into the Whitewater Land Development Co. in which she and Bill Clinton were partners in the 1980s.

That has been one of the central questions about the money-losing business venture now under scrutiny by a special counsel investigating a broad range of issues that have fallen under the "Whitewater" label.

She calmly insisted nothing wrong took place in her investments in cattle futures markets — when she made nearly \$100,000 in nine months on an initial investment of only \$1,000.

She called herself fortunate to be steered into a good opportunity by an old friend

and investment expert, James Blair, but got no improper advantage from that relationship.

"It was a good investment, offered by somebody who knew a lot, who could provide a lot of good advice, and I was lucky and made the decision to stop when I did," she said.

Although the affairs have hounded her and President Clinton, the first lady showed no anger as reporters peppered her with questions — frequently saying things like "I'm glad you asked about that" in response to questions.

A survey released Friday night by U.S. News and World Report magazine showed that Whitewater has had a negative impact on the first lady. A year ago, 72 per cent of Americans felt she helped her husband's presidency. That number fell to 51 per cent in the new poll.

The poll also found Americans nearly evenly split on whether or not Mrs. Clinton

has been truthful on family finances — with 48 per cent saying "yes" and 41 per cent saying "no."

"I feel very confident about how this will all turn out," she told reporters. "This is not a long-term problem or issue in any way," Mrs. Clinton said at extended exchange with reporters about the Whitewater affair.

Saying "we went into Whitewater to make money, not to lose it," the first lady said "the embarrassing thing to me is that we ended up losing money and it keeps being beaten like the deadest horse there is, over and over again."

She freely admitted misjudging the impact the affair has had — saying her effort to be "a fairly private person leading a public life, led me to perhaps be less understanding than I needed to of both the press and the public's interest, as well as right, to know things about my husband and me."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ski Paradise wins big Japan race

TOKYO (R) — Odds-on favourite Ski Paradise, ridden by Japan's top jockey Yutaka Take, surged to the front on the home stretch to score an impressive 1-1/2 lengths win in the Keio-Hai Spring Cup run over 1.4 kilometres Saturday. It was the fifth victory in 13 starts for the four-year-old filly, who was running for the first time since she finished second in the Breeders' Cup Mile in Santa Anita last November. Ski Paradise earned prize money of \$582,000 out of the total purse of \$1.1 million.

French crew breaks sailing record

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — An avant-garde French sailboat skimmed the waters below the Golden Gate Bridge Friday night, ending a record-breaking journey from New York to the San Francisco Bay. Isabelle Autissier, 37, and her crew piloted the Ecureuil Poitou-Charentes 2 into the bay some two weeks faster than the old record, set in 1989. The craft followed the 13,945-mile (22,438-km) Cape Horn route once travelled by the famed clipper ships of the last century. The craft crossed the imaginary finish line in the bay at 8:32 p.m., 62 days, five hours and 55 minutes after leaving New York. The former record-holder, the Trimaran Great American, did not even reach the northern hemisphere until after its 60th day.

Chinese champion suspended for doping

TOKYO (R) — Chinese women's judo champion Tang Liyong was banned for two years Friday after testing positive for drugs during the Asian Championships in Macao last November. Kyodo news agency said. The suspension was announced at a technical committee meeting of the Judo Union of Asia (JUA) in Tokyo where officials said Tang was found to have taken a banned diuretic. Tang won the women's 48-KG division at the Asian Championships. Liu Yuyi, an official of the Chinese Judo Association, denied Tang took a diuretic but said the athlete appeared to have taken some sort of medicine when she was admitted to hospital because of an illness before the championships, Kyodo said.

State Department clears Cuban trip

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado (AFP) — The U.S. State Department Friday intervened to allow shooting competitors from several countries to travel from the World Cup USA to Cuba for a World Cup event in Cuba next week. About 400 shooters from more than 60 countries are in Fort Benning, Georgia, for the American event. About 250 of them were to travel to Havana Sunday. The plans hit a snag when the State Department learned that Olympic-style competitors travel with their own weapons. U.S. regulations bar the export of firearms to Cuba. On Friday, after intervention by senators Sam Nunn and Ted Stevens, the State Department determined that the rule did not apply to the special target guns used in competition.

Cadalora takes pole in Japanese GP

SUZUKA, Japan (AFP) — Luca Cadalora starts Sunday's Japanese 500cc Grand Prix in pole position after steady rains during the final session Saturday left the lap record he set on Friday unbeaten. The Italian Yamaha rider, seeking his first win of the season, stormed to a new lap record of 2min 8.33secs on the 5.86 kilometre (3.64 mile) course on Friday to take top spot over rivals Michael Doohan and Kevin Schwantz. The rain started early Saturday, slowing down the pace and ensuring that none of the riders was able to better their Friday times.

Cameroon cancels friendly with Zambia

YAOUNDE (R) — Cameroon's chaotic preparations for this year's World Cup finals hit a new low Saturday when state radio announced the cancellation of Sunday's friendly match against Zambia. The radio gave no reasons for the last-minute decision. The warm-up match in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital, was organised by an obscure company called Audio Visual International Communication. Soccer journalists said the company was unable to raise the funds to bring Zambia, one of Africa's top teams. Cameroon's indomitable Lions were Africa's pride in the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy, reaching the quarter-finals.

Moorer dethrones Holyfield

LAS VEGAS (R) — Friday night's title fight may not have been about hooks and jabs as much as it was about Evander Holyfield showing that fighters can turn into old men in just 36 minutes.

Michael Moorer, 26, snatched Holyfield's World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) heavyweight titles in a majority decision and turned in a very creditable job, especially with his jarring right jab that tattooed the former champion all night.

But it was Holyfield's inability to get out of the way of the jab and his generally sloppy, doddering performance that made the job much easier. It seemed that the often tentative left-handed challenger could hit the 31-year-old Holyfield with his right jab anytime he wished.

Holyfield did manage to land combinations to the new champion's head and even knocked Moorer down in the second round. But Holyfield's legs — where the torque for the power is generated — seemed to be wanting to play shuffleboard instead.

Holyfield knocked down Moorer in the second round, but judge Jerry Roth saw it as a "flash" knockdown and scored the round even. If he had scored it 10-9 as the other judges had it, Holyfield would have won. The other judges scored the fight 114-114 and 116-112.

Moorer got up quickly and later said he had only been momentarily stunned, neither man was knocked down after that.



Michael Moorer poses with the IBF and WBA heavyweight title belts after defeating champion Evander Holyfield (AFP photo)

Moorer won the fifth round on all cards and he seemed to be gaining momentum as he hit Holyfield with a left uppercut jarring him into the ropes. The cut opened up shortly after that.

Moorer, now 35-0, also won the sixth round from the judges, and in the seventh round, he came back to land strong punches after being battered by a series of Holyfield's blows.

Moorer hurt Holyfield in the 12th round with a right hook and then immediately followed up to do more damage with his powerful jab. Holyfield slugged it out with Moorer until the bell, but Moorer was in no danger.

"Him being left-handed was a big problem, but I did train for it," Holyfield said. "The cut made it difficult,

but Michael Moorer fought a great fight," Holyfield said. Holyfield, now 30-2, also did not help his cause much by crucial decisions, dictated by a concern for money, he made outside the ring.

He switched to a new trainer — his third in four fights — and fired his cutman.

And, as luck would have it in this town built on losing gambles, Holyfield was cut and bothered by blood oozing into his eye throughout the fight.

His trainer, Don Turner, had said with little modesty earlier in the week that "you gotta be a real idiot not to be able to talk and fix a cut at the same time."

Without trying to categorise his intelligence quotient, it was noted that the cut did not appear to be very deep and that it bled for several rounds.

Marseille to fight relegation decision

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — Bernard Tapie vowed Saturday to fight the decision to relegate Olympique Marseille and ban him from football as punishment for his club's role in the Valenciennes match-fixing scandal.

Tapie told AFP he would be taking the decision to relegate the European Cup holders to court and would be appealing his own ban through the arbitration committee of the National Olympic Committee. The sanctions against Marseille and Tapie, the club president, were announced Friday after the French Football Federation decided the club was implicated in an attempt to bribe three Valenciennes players before a league

match at the end of the last season.

Valenciennes player Christophe Robert, who was banned from playing in France until July 1996, has confessed to taking 250,000 francs (\$50,000) to take it easy during the match. Marseille's Jean Jacques Eydelie, also banned until 1996, admitted acting as an intermediary between the club's former general manager, Jean-Pierre Bernes, who was banned for life, and the Valenciennes players.

On the basis of their testimony, the federation felt it could announce sporting sanctions ahead of the completion of the criminal investigation into the affair.

Scherbo wins floor exercise gold medal

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — Vitaly Scherbo, the dominant figure in men's gymnastics for the past two years, rebounded back to top form Saturday, winning the floor exercise gold medal at the world championships.

The 22-year-old from Belarus scored 9.75 points for his floor routine to win ahead of Neil Thomas of Britain and Ioannis Melissanidis of Greece, who shared second place at 9.687 points.

Gina Gogean of Romania won the women's vault gold medal with 9.812 ahead of Svetlana Chorkina of Russia, who scored 9.800, and Lavinia Milosovic of Romania, who scored 9.787.

Shannon Miller of the United States, who successfully defended her all-around title Friday night, led after her first vault but tumbled on the dismount from her second vault and finished seventh at 9.543.

Violence mars end of 1993 soccer season

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The conclusion of the 1993 first division soccer championship will be one that cannot be forgotten, not for its action-packed soccer but for the unhappy ending of the Wihdat-Faisali match. Friday which was disrupted following acts of violence which police had to contain by tear gas.

Instead of enjoying the final match of the season which grouped champions, Al Faisali, and runners-up Al Wihdat, over 100 fans and eight policemen emerged bruised and injured following the match attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, the vice-president of the Asian Soccer Federation and over 20,000 fans.

The Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) was meeting late Saturday to review the incidents and take appropriate measures (see story on page 1). Al Faisali were leading 2-0 when the match was halted.

Al Baqaa relegated

While the result of the Wihdat-Faisali match has no bearing on the standings of both teams — as Al Faisali have won their 25th title while Al Wihdat finished second — the results of the final week of the 22-week-long competition were very important to the rest of the teams.

In the final week action, Al Baqaa became the fourth team to be relegated alongside Al

Yarmouk, Sahab and Fuheis.

Despite Al Baqaa's 4-1 win over Al Yarmouk, they could not hold on to their place in the division after the rest of the teams threatened with relegation scored some surprising results which enabled them to remain among the Kingdom's top teams.

Al Baqaa's goals were all scored late in the match. The first was in the 62nd minute by Al Yarmouk's defender Imad Mahmoud. Riyad Diq added another goal three minutes later.

Jamal Wheidi scored Al Baqaa's third goal, which was followed by Al Yarmouk's sole goal by Khaled Yousef in the 88th minute.

Al Baqaa missed a penalty shot but Bilal Al Asi ended his teams' scoring spree when he netted in the fourth goal in the 90th minute.

Al Baqaa's officials Saturday accused the rest of the teams of "unfair play by rigging matches", as the three other teams — Al Ramtha, Al Arabi and Al Qadissieh — all of whom were threatened by relegation — scored unexpected wins over their opponents.

Al Ramtha avoided relegation when they scored a crucial 2-1 victory over Al Ahli.

Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib opened scoring in the 20th minute, but Al Ahli's Bami Ramadan equalised five minutes later.

Mahmoud Raja scored Al Ramtha's winning goal in the 67th minute, saving his team from relegation to finish in

seventh place while Al Ahli came in fifth.

Al Qadissieh held on to their halfway position when they beat Al Fuheis 3-0 to clinch fourth place.

The league's second best striker Mustafa Adam scored Al Qadissieh's first goal in the 20th minute.

Munir Abu Hantash scored the second goal in the 13rd minute, and Adam sealed his team's win with another goal in the 89th minute.

Adam thus scored a total of 16 goals in the season, while Faisali's Tadoros won the best striker award with 19 goals.

Sahab scored a 4-3 win over Al Jazireh who managed to stay in the first division in eighth place.

Al Jazireh's Maher Mafarjeh scored a stunning goal in the 5th minute, but Sahab equalised five minutes later. They took the lead after scoring their second goal in the 27th minute and the third goal in the 44th minute. Al Jazireh's second goal came from a penalty shot in the 50th minute. But after their veteran striker Tawfiq Al Sahab was out with an injury, Sahab put on an all-out attack celebrating their lead and win.

Al Jazireh scored their third goal from a penalty kick in the 84th minute.

Al Arabi scored a 2-0 win over Al Hussein to finish eighth ending Al Hussein's hopes for runner-up position which was clinched by Al Wihdat, while Al Hussein remained third

Chicago's bid suffers setback

CHICAGO, Illinois (AFP) — Just when they needed Michael Jordan to pull out a victory, the Chicago Bulls were left struggling without the retired superstar.

The three-time reigning National Basketball Association (NBA) champions suffered a setback in their bid for the top east playoff seed here Friday night, losing to Boston 104-94 in double overtime.

Meanwhile, Jordan was going 1-for-4 with an infield single for the Birmingham Barons of U.S. baseball's Minor League. Jordan is batting .324 for the season (12-for-37) while trying to achieve a dream of reaching the Major League.

Without him, the Bulls fell to 55-26, one game behind eastern leaders Atlanta and New York with one game to play. The Bulls play host to New York Sunday.

Also Friday, Dutchman Rik Smits scored 40 points, the most in his six-year NBA career, and Indiana beat Phi-

ladelphia 133-88 to remain ahead in the battle for the east's fifth seed.

The Pacers established team records with their seventh straight triumph and 46th victory of the season. They matched a team mark for victory margin, tying a 14-year-old record with the triumph Friday night.

Smits scored 24 points in the first half, matching the total of Philadelphia's starters.

"He was phenomenal," Indiana coach Larry Brown said. "Every time I looked around, he was making a sensational play."

The Pacers tied Cleveland for fifth at 46-35. Indiana would receive the higher playoff spot after winning 3-of-5 from Cleveland this season.

Cleveland and New Jersey are fighting for the next two spots while Miami is assured of facing the east champion in the opening round.

In the west playoff picture, top seed Seattle and eighth-seed Denver have already set dates for their opening series Houston, despite a slight injury to centre Hakeem Olajuwon, is assured of the second seed and will play Portland in the first round.

San Antonio and Phoenix, led by Olympians David Robinson and Charles Barkley respectively, are fighting for the third seed. The Suns, finalists a year ago, need only beat lowly Sacramento on Saturday to seal the higher berth.

Whichever finishes higher gets to play Golden State in the opening round, while the fourth seed has a tougher battle on their hands with Utah, paced by Olympians Karl Malone and John Stockton.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSH
© Tribune Media Services, Inc.

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKQ ♠ 108754 ♠ 9853 ♠ A9
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?

What action do you take?
A.—The negative aspect of your holding is that the high cards are in the short suits. The plus factor is your secondary fit for partner's suit. We think the hand is just worth a game try and would issue the invitation by raising to three hearts.

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 785 ♠ 1082 ♠ J43 ♠ K853
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
2 ♠ 3 ♠ Pass Pass
Dbl Pass ?

*Artificial, game force
What action do you take?
A.—Considering your length in East's suit, partner's double is obviously for takeout and you are free to remove it if you desire. However, with this distribution you have no reason to believe that any contract your side might make is as difficult as possible for them to get into the auction. Increase the preempt by jumping to five diamonds.

Q.3—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ J5 ♠ 43 ♠ A97 ♠ AKJ63
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
2 ♠ 4 ♠ ? Pass ?

What action do you take?
A.—While the North hand does not have to be all that strong in defensive values, partner must have a very good heart suit. We think you can make a slam as long as you don't have two fast spade losers. The way to find out is to bid over

game—raise to five hearts. Your failure to cue bid spades should alert partner to the need for a spade control.

Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ AK7652 ♠ K102 ♠ 2 ♠ A106
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
1 NT Pass ?

What do you bid now?
A.—With a full opening bid facing a partner who opened, you want to be in game. It's close whether you should bid three no trump or four spades, but we prefer the latter. The one bid you can't make is three spades—that is simply invitational.

Q.5—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 2 ♠ Q9765 ♠ Q852 ♠ KQ
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
2 ♠ 3 ♠ ? Dbl ?

What action do you take?
A.—You have no reason to believe the opponents cannot make at least game, possibly slam, on this hand, so you should make it as difficult as possible for them to get into the auction. Increase the preempt by jumping to five diamonds.

Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ AKQ95 ♠ J103 ♠ A3 ♠ A103
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with three diamonds. What action do you take?
A.—Your hand is too rich in quick tricks and your spade suit is a card or two short for a jump to four spades. The way to show your strong all-round hand is to double first and then consider whether to bid spades over partner's response or take a shot at three no trump.

AMMAN LITTLE LEAGUE

Results of Little League baseball games played Friday, April 22

Opel 32
Aramex 24

T-BALL

Renault 29
Budget 23

COACH PITCH

Apple 14
Modern Schools 11

KID PITCH

Peugeot 7
Epson 6 (game to be continued)

SENIORS

Alphacorn-A 12
Skoda-B 7

Skoda-A 7
Alphacorn-B 0

Amman Little League baseball standings (after games played on Friday, April 22, 1994)

T-BALL

	Won	Lost	Percentage	Games behind
Aramex	2	0	1000	—
Budget	1	1	.500	1
Opel	1	1	.500	1
Renault	0	2	.000	2

COACH PITCH

	Won	Lost	Percentage	Games behind
CCC	2	0	1000	—
GEMT	1	0	1000	1/2
Marriott	1	1	.500	1
Modern Schools	0	1	.000	1 1/2
Apple	0	2	.000	2

KID PITCH

	Won	Lost	Percentage	Games behind
Yellow Pages	2	0	1000	—
Alpha Shipping	1	0	1000	1/2
Epson	0	0	—	—
General Plastic	0	1	.000	1 1/2
Peugeot	0	2	.000	2

* Friday's 6-6 tie game between Epson and General Plastic Co. will be continued next week.

	Cinema Tel.: 634144	Cinema Tel.: 699238	Cinema Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
T O D A Y	TOM & JERRY The Movie Performances: 11:00, 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30 "White Palace": at 10:30 p.m.	Corey Haim & Corey Feldman, Nicole Eggen in BLOWN AWAY Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' A PERFECT WORLD Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' MR. JONS Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	The political comedy play FORBIDDEN FORBIDDEN Every night at 8:30 p.m.	Coming soon Abu Awad in: The new comedy play: "A PUNCTURED BAG" Directed by Ghassan Al Mashini	The Political Satire "Ahlam Arab Summit Conference" at 8:30 p.m.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi group says member's family pressured

NICOSIA (R) — A Saudi Arabian civil rights group said on Saturday that Saudi officials were putting pressure on the family of its London office head to make him return to the kingdom. "The Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) has learned that the Saudi authorities have started exercising pressures upon the family of Doctor Sa'ad Al Faqih," a CDLR statement said. "This is in order to persuade him to return to the kingdom and relinquish his role in the committee in exchange for what has been described as 'a royal pardon,'" it added. The statement, which was faxed to Reuters from London, said Dr. Faqih was the CDLR's London office director. It was signed by Dr. Faqih and CDLR spokesman Mohammad Al Masari, a physics professor who the group says spent six months in detention in Saudi Arabia before coming to London.

Three hurt in Cairo gas blast

CAIRO (AFP) — An explosion in an empty house injured three passers-by in a crowded district of Cairo Saturday. The Interior Ministry said it was caused by a gas leak. Earlier, security officials had said a bomb had exploded in the house in Matereyah and police were questioning a militant in connection with the blast. Witnesses told AFP gas installations had not been set up in the district in northern Cairo. Two militants were injured Thursday when five explosive devices they were planning to use in attacks accidentally blew up in a shop in the Ain Shams district of Cairo. The blast badly damaged the front of the shop, which was owned by one of the injured, a chemist. His cousin was also hurt.

Vietnamese pushed out of train in Germany

POTSDAM, Germany (R) — Unknown attackers apparently pushed a 33-year-old Vietnamese man out of a moving train in eastern Germany breaking both his ankles, police said Saturday. The man said he asked two Germans, whom he described as shaven-headed, about a stop on the journey. The men took away his ticket and pushed him out of the train between the towns of Ruhland and Hoyerswerda. For three years since unification, Germany has been dogged by racist violence, often carried out by young shaven-headed skinheads of neo-Nazis. This week six youths were charged in the northern town of Bielefeld with setting fire to a house inhabited by Turks.

Briton faces caning in Qatar

LONDON (AFP) — A Qatari court has sentenced a Briton to 50 strokes of the cane after the soles of his feet on conviction of illicit alcohol sales to a Muslim, the man's father said here Saturday. But Colonel Derek Sherrard-Smith charged that his computer programmer son Gavin "has been set up" by police. The 30-year-old Briton had been working with Qatari police for 18 months when he was arrested last November and charged with selling around a dozen bottles of alcohol to a Muslim colleague. An Islamic court sentenced him on Jan. 24 to 50 cane lashes and a six-month prison sentence, to be followed by expulsion from Qatar. Col. Sherrard-Smith said: "We fear that the physical and degrading punishment, ordered on very flimsy evidence, may well cause irreparable psychological harm." The meeting (between his son and the Muslim purchaser) took place, observed by the CID who claimed that money was given for the sale of alcohol... (but) only one eyewitness alleged he had seen the transaction, whereas the Holy Koran requires at least two.

Mashhad gunman tried to kill himself

TEHRAN (AFP) — A man who fired shots at a Muslim prayer leader in the holy city of Mashhad in northeastern Iran later tried to commit suicide, Iranian newspapers reported Saturday. The man, who shot and wounded Hojatoleslam Abai-Khorassani with a pistol during a religious service Friday, fired a bullet into his stomach before being overpowered by worshippers who handed him over to the security forces. Three shots were fired at Hojatoleslam Abai-Khorassani, hitting him in the neck and chest. He was rushed to hospital, where his condition was reported to be satisfactory. A stray bullet also injured a young religious scholar, the newspaper said. The gunman underwent surgery during which part of his intestines was removed. The motive for the attack, the first ever on a Muslim cleric leading Friday prayers in Iran, was not known. It took place at the Gohar-Shad mosque near the Imam Reza Mausoleum, one of Shiite Islam's holiest shrines.

Aid agency to be taken to court in Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — A U.S.-based voluntary aid agency working in Sudan is to be taken to court for allegedly distributing spoiled food unfit for human consumption, a Khartoum newspaper reported on Saturday. The government-owned Al Inqaz Al Watani daily said Justice Minister and Attorney-General Abdul Aziz Shidu issued a decision to prosecute the area development agency. In recent weeks Khartoum newspapers have carried several articles about an international voluntary organisation distributing and selling spoiled relief food but few details have emerged.

Rwandan rebels declare truce

ARUSHA, Tanzania (Agencies) — Rwandan rebels declared a unilateral ceasefire from midnight (2100 GMT) Monday ahead of peace talks which opened here late Saturday, but said it would only hold if the government agreed to end ethnic bloodletting.

A "unilateral declaration of ceasefire" signed by rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), leader Alexis Kanyarengwe and issued in this northern Tanzanian town blamed the massacres of tens of thousands of Rwandans on the "presidential guard, armed civilians and militias."

It called for a "cessation of hostilities" to get food and medicine to tens or possibly hundreds of thousands of displaced people and "bring this conflict to a peaceful settlement."

The death of President Juvenal Habyarimana in a mysterious April 6 plane crash triggered an ethnic bloodbath and rekindled the three-year civil war.

The rebel declaration said the ceasefire would be conditional on the government forces "controlling all killings and acts of violence in areas under their control within 96 hours of the coming into force of this declaration."

Another condition was that the government forces accept an international inquiry into the killings and allow those found responsible to be punished.

It also made the end of fighting dependent on the government forces agreeing to joint security patrols with the rebels to stop atrocities.

It also said the government must agree to joint control of the airport and safe corridors for humanitarian aid.

U.N. envoy Jacques-Roger Booth-Booth said U.N. peacekeepers evacuated from Rwanda may return if the talks here lead to a ceasefire.

"I have been authorised by (U.N.) Secretary-General (Boutros Ghali) to keep 1,000 troops in Nairobi so that if we get a ceasefire they can be brought back quickly," Mr. Booth-Booth said.

The U.N. envoy arrived

here on Friday for talks between the RPF and the interim government aimed at ending the bloodletting that has cost tens of thousands of lives.

The talks, chaired by Tanzanian Prime Minister John Malecela, were due to open at six p.m. (1500 GMT).

But many delegates had not arrived by mid-afternoon.

The government delegation, led by Interior Minister Faustin Munyazesa and including at least two top military officers, was flying here from the eastern Zairean town of Goma, diplomats said.

The interim government formed after the president's death drove to Zaire from the southern Rwandan town of Gitarama, where its members fled from Kigali nearly two weeks ago as tribal killings engulfed the capital.

Also expected here later Saturday was Organisation of African Unity Secretary General Salim Ahmad Salim, who expressed outrage at the United Nations' decision to withdraw almost all its peacekeepers from Rwanda.

Aid agencies also condemned the pullout of about 1,000 peacekeepers which they said left Rwandan civilians unprotected.

U.N. spokesman Mootar Gueye said about 12,000 Rwandans were under U.N. protection in Kigali, including about 5,000 displaced people in a sports stadium where 40 civilians were killed Tuesday by government shells.

Mr. Gueye said another 100 people had been wounded, about half of whom "will probably not survive."

Mr. Booth-Booth said most of the peacekeepers had arrived in Nairobi from Kigali, leaving only a skeleton force of about 300 U.N. soldiers who are to stay in the Rwandan capital.

Their original mission was to monitor a ceasefire between the rebels, mostly from the minority Tutsi tribe, and the government forces, drawn mainly from the majority Hutus.

The two sides signed Tanzanian-mediated peace accords in Arusha last August.

Gulf Arabs wary of U.S. call for democracy

RIYADH (AFP) — Gulf Arab states have reservations about a U.S. document calling on them to encourage pluralism and democracy as the basis of future relations in the Middle East, Arab diplomats said here Saturday.

The document, presented to the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in February, said the United States wanted to see participants in the multilateral Middle East peace talks "encourage individual and collective freedoms and pursue democracy and pluralism."

It said relations between states in the region should be based on such concepts in the future.

Foreign ministry officials from GCC members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman met in Riyadh Saturday to discuss the document. They had "reservations" about the proposals, the diplomats said.

The ministry officials were to coordinate their positions on the document and review their participation in the multilateral talks, launched at the Madrid peace conference in 1991.

Of the six GCC states only Kuwait has an elected parliament with various political groups represented.

The other five have specially-appointed consultative assemblies.

On Tuesday the multilateral working group on water resources — one of five set up in Madrid — ended talks in Oman with agreements on five projects to boost scarce water supplies and establish Israeli-Arab cooperation.

The talks were attended by an Israeli delegation, visiting a Gulf Arab country for the first time ever.

Qatar is due to host a meeting of the working group on disarmament from May 2 to 5. The other three groups deal with economic cooperation, refugees and the environment.

Accord on army move eludes Yemen cabinet

SANAA (R) — Yemen's cabinet failed to decide on Saturday how to move rival army units from potential flashpoints, one of the issues threatening national unity.

Political sources said the cabinet met only briefly over the plan to move army units away from areas near what was the border between North and South Yemen merged into a single country four years ago. A new cabinet meeting was set for May 2.

Yemen's armed forces are still to be fully integrated.

A brief statement by Sanaa Radio on the meeting made no mention of the military item, nor did it say what was discussed.

Defence Minister Haitham Qassem Taber, a southerner, failed to attend the meeting in the capital Sanaa, the sources said.

Mr. Taber, a member of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) of estranged Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh, has been boycotting cabinet meetings in Sanaa for five months.

At the core of the dispute

between the YSP and the General Peoples Congress GPC of President Ali Abdullah Saleh is the re-deployment of northern and southern army troops, who clashed in February after Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh signed a reconciliation accord in Jordan.

A multinational military commission last week failed to agree on a redeployment plan.

Differences arose between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh in August, paralysing the government and sparking military clashes. The crisis threatens to redetermine Yemen.

The GPC denied on Friday it had rushed tanks and arms to loyal troops in the south and accused Aden of cutting supply routes to northern forces.

The GPC was responding to a YSP charge that northern rivals were rushing seven helicopters loaded with weapons, military equipment and soldiers to the Amalqah Brigade "without prior notification."

The YSP said on Thursday two infantry battalions, 10 tanks and four Katyusha-mounted vehicles were moved

to areas along the former border.

"There were no weapons or military equipment on the helicopters. There were also no troop reinforcements," a GPC official source said.

"The (southern) 20th brigade is cutting supply routes to the (northern) Amalqah Brigade," the source added.

Northern helicopters "are lifting food supplies and medicines" to the Amalqah Brigade which is stationed in the southern province of Abyan, the source added.

Amalqah is a northern brigade deployed in the south following the merger.

Meanwhile Yemeni troops have been sent to surround an area where three Dutch engineers are believed to be held hostage by tribesmen, political sources said.

The three — Wilbert Elderborst, Gerard Jeurissen, and Jac van der Gun — were seized in March 25 by the Jahn tribe.

One source said deployment of the army unit was meant as a warning to tribes in the area.

Christopher trip aims to give boost to Mideast peace talks

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Secretary of State Warren Christopher leaves Sunday for the Middle East where he hopes to give fresh political impetus to the overall Middle East peace process, and to the Israeli-Palestinian discussions in particular.

"We're going to encourage the parties to come to closure on implementation of the Gaza-Jericho accords," spokesman Michael McCurry told on Friday news briefing. "We believe the secretary's presence in the region can help to spur and an incentive for them to really complete the work on the document necessary to fully implement the declaration."

Mr. McCurry noted that talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in both Cairo and in Bucharest have been making considerable progress. "We will do what we can while we're in the region to lay a stronger substantive basis for progress on all the tracks so that when the negotiations resume here in Washington following the secretary's trip they'll be in a position to advance the dialogue even further," the spokesman said.

The secretary feels that it's very important to demonstrate the United States is staying the course on our policy with respect to Iraq, that both our humanitarian efforts in northern Iraq and our effort to contain Saddam Hussein's aggression need to be underscored and need to be made clear," Mr. McCurry said, adding "I think a lot of his discussions while in the region will focus on that aspect of our policy."

Asked about the Israeli-PLO talks, the senior official noted that "they seem now to have resolved the issue on the transfer of authority from the civil administration to the Palestinians," and added, "They made further headway on some of the outstanding security questions that were still open... I think the we made headway both in terms of

drafting (texts) and in terms of dealing with the resolution of some of these issues."

The senior official suggested more attention is being given to the Syrian track of the bilateral negotiations "because there is a sense on the Israeli side that they are close to closure with the Palestinians on the implementation agreement and how the implementation will go forward." Recent statements by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin have been "quite serious and quite significant," the official said.

He said it seems clear that the Israelis are developing a set of ideas that are designed to deal with the outstanding issues of peace, security, and withdrawal and how they fit together.

"We'll have a discussion not only about their ideas but how best to convey ideas and how best to use that conveyance to promote the process," the senior official said, noting "there is seriousness on each side, but the gaps that separate the parties are real."

This trip "has to be seen in terms of setting the stage for trying to push ahead," the official said, emphasising the need to be realistic. "There is a lot of work to be done. I don't see breakthroughs being imminent. But I think," he said, "you constantly are trying to see if you can create new baselines from which to work."

The high-level dialogue established by President Clinton and Syrian President Assad "has clearly been important in terms of sustaining the peace process," the official said. "The fact is he and Syria are a critical part of this overall process. I think when Prime Minister Rabin was here, one of the things he said was that he saw Syria as being the key to a comprehensive settlement. That's a view that we've had, but he said it as well. So if one wants to pursue peace, this is clearly a critical partner," the official said.

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PLO officials, police and deportees await magic call

By Mariam M. Shablin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THOUSANDS OF Palestinian policemen, deportees and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) bureaucrats in Amman, Tunis, Cairo and elsewhere in the Arab World are awaiting word on their return to the occupied territories.

Ever since PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn on Sept. 13, thousands of the Palestinians who expect to be among the first to return to help implement Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories once self-rule begins have been glued to their radios, telephones and fax machines — on "stand-by," awaiting news "any moment" of their long yearned-for return to the homeland.

Delays after delays in the implementation of the declaration of principles has created frustration and discontent among all, but hope is by no means gone. Israel is a

negotiating partner and has veto power over "every name" or so Palestinian policemen, deportees and PLO bureaucrats believe. While PLO negotiators say that they will decide who enters Palestinian lands and that these are open to all Palestinians, Israel has served the right to veto any person they feel they do not want in the occupied territories.

Brigadier Mohammad Qudsieh, head of the Palestinian police force in Jordan, sits in his Jabal Hussein-based headquarters every morning drinking tea with his colonels and lieutenants. "We are ready to move at any time," says Brig. Qudsieh, who heads the prestigious Bader Brigades, a force of some 3,200 members of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA).

A total of 7,000 PLA fighters based in Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and Algeria are expected to return to the occupied territories as policemen once the final implementation agreement is signed by Palestinian

and Israeli negotiators in Cairo.

"We have been ready since Dec. 13," says Brig. Qudsieh referring to the date initially agreed upon for the first phase of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho.

But during the last trip by Mr. Arafat to Jordan, Brig. Qudsieh apparently got no instructions to "get ready" or be "on stand-by" from his commander-in-chief.

Brig. Qudsieh, like most PLA members, is not a native of the West Bank or Gaza but a refugee from the parts of Palestine that became Israel in 1948. He left the occupied territories in the 1967 war.

Brig. Qudsieh and his lieutenants have made lists of supplies and equipment that they will need once they settle in Jericho. Among the first PLA batch to go will be doctors and engineers, PLA officials say.

"A lot of the infrastructure will be built by us," said one PLA colonel who is an engineer. "We will probably build a lot of our own barracks and will transform the existing hospital into a milit-

ary or police hospital."

Brig. Qudsieh says that as a Palestinian police force his people will be on hand to "serve the Palestinian people," a task he says will mainly entail providing security for Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Aishah Odeh is one of 1,850 Palestinians who have the special status of having been individually deported by the Israeli occupation authorities.

Ms. Odeh, like Brig. Qudsieh and his lieutenants, is also anxiously awaiting her return. A member of FIDA, the off-spring of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Ms. Odeh was imprisoned for 10 years for military activities against the occupation before she was released and deported to Jordan in 1979.

Knowing that Palestinian deportees with a military background would be the last that Israel would allow to return, she lives with the hope that the Sept. 13 Oslo accords will allow for her return by the time Palestinian self-rule begins.

This week, a group of 50 deportees was expected to return, but PLO officials in Cairo and Tunis said that the "list of names" had still to be agreed upon.

Working as an administrator in the PLO bureaucracy, Ms. Odeh knows that her name will eventually appear "on a list" of the deportees that will be allowed to return. "Once one group goes, I know that the count-down is on. Every time one deportee returns I get a little closer to the return," she said.

No one gives Ms. Odeh much hope of an imminent return yet she lives every day as "if it will be my last in Amman."

Her modest apartment in Jabal Hussein is decorated with "portable things." "I would need 24 hours to get everything I need together," says Ms. Odeh, who remains one of the most famous Palestinian women to have been imprisoned by Israel to date.

PLO officials have not promised her much except that once Mr. Arafat returns she would be among the odd

500 administrators expected to return with him.

"About 400-500 administrators will be accompanying the leadership upon its return to the occupied territories," said a senior FIDA official in Amman this week. Ms. Odeh will probably be among this group.

Salah Tamari, a senior member of Fateh's Revolutionary Council, recently came to Jordan after a six-year stay in the United States, where he organised youth camps for Palestinian-Americans.

Sitting in his home/office in Jabal Amman he receives phone call after phone call from Palestinian officials and relatives in Bethlehem.

"We have been ready for the return for a very long time," says Mr. Tamari. The top military commander of Fateh in Sidon, Lebanon from 1970-1982, Mr. Tamari is most famous for his leadership role in the Al Ansar prison camp, where the Israelis held almost 10,000 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners after the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

"I will not be a member of

the military after my return," says Mr. Tamari who expects to return with the leadership, "sometime in the next six months."

"I have many ideas and projects in mind to create social education programmes for children, youth and especially women," he says.

"The conditions of youth and women are my single greatest interest because I believe that these two groups represent the future of a healthy Palestinian society," he explains.

The transformation from being a military commander to a civil leader will not be difficult, Mr. Tamari says. "Every stage has its requirements and we must adapt ourselves to meet those requirements. For now the military struggle is over and the social struggle of state building must begin."

Mr. Tamari goes back and forth between his Amman home and the PLO headquarters in Tunis where he attends Fateh meetings. "The time is coming closer. We will not have to wait too much longer before we return."

Explorer sets North Pole record

OSLO (R) — Norwegian explorer Boerge Ousland became the first person to reach the North Pole alone and without help after a 52-day trek dragging a sledge across the hostile icecap, his spokesman said. "He reached the pole and sent a satellite transmission saying 'expedition ended — was pick-up,'" Hans Christian Erlandsen told Reuters. "Right now we are sipping champagne." Mr. Ousland, who built up fat reserves by drinking a glass of olive oil for breakfast every day for a year before setting off, will be lifted off the ice by two planes expected to arrive on Saturday afternoon. His father will be on one of them, bringing a bottle of champagne and a typical Norwegian cake made of almonds. Mr. Ousland definitely uses some extra calories after his 1,000-kilometre slog on skis from Siberia. A string of explorers has reached the North Pole since American Robert Peary led the first successful expedition in 1909 but none has done so alone and without help of dogsleds, snowshoes or airdrops. Mr. Ousland set off around the same time as two other explorers with the same goal but they long ago gave up the quest. Briton Rupert Hadow was plucked off the ice after covering only 46 kilometres of the distance from the northern tip of Canada in 23 days and Japan's Mitsuo Oba has been given supplies and a ride on a plane to bring him closer to the pole.

Firefighters save some Galapagos turtles

QUITO (R) — Firefighters struggled to protect endangered wildlife from a blaze on the largest of the Galapagos Islands, and said they were able to save a colony of rare giant turtles. The fire, which has destroyed 15,000 acres (6,000 hectares) of woodland on Isabela Island since it began 11 days ago, was successfully diverted from a colony of 150 of the turtles, but continued spreading in other directions, officials said. The flames were prevented from reaching the turtles by a trench dug close to the volcano where they live, a civil defence spokesman said. Other wildlife on the island, which is home to 6,000 giant turtles and other rare breeds, including iguanas.

French woman ends record voyage

SAN FRANCISCO, California (AFP) — French sailor Isabelle Autissier and her crew aboard the ship Ecuireuil Poitou-Charentes set a record for sailing from New York to San Francisco by arriving here Friday night. Autissier and her crew smashed the old mark by more than two weeks with their journey, which began Feb. 19 in New York and extended around Cape Horn. Her arrival at 8:32 p.m. local time (3:32 a.m. GMT) completed the record journey in 62 days, five hours, 55 minutes and 40 seconds. Autissier's team for the 22,312-kilometre trek included Lionel Lemonchois, Luc Bartissol and Pascal Boimard. The former mark, set in 1989, was broken by 14 days, 17 hours, 24 minutes and 20 seconds. That standard had been set by Canadian Georgs Kolesnikovs and U.S. sailor Steve Pettengill aboard Great American. Autissier's boat reached the finish at a point during which the previous record boat had not even returned to the northern hemisphere.

Nuns get top Spanish prize

OVIEDO, Spain (AP) — Spanish missionaries to strife-torn Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi were awarded one of Spain's prestigious Prince of Asturias Prizes for their outstanding humanitarian work. In a statement, organisers said the award was in recognition of the nuns' "humanity and solidarity which are exceptional examples for modern society." The nuns and their efforts to help protect the lives of dozens of people caught up in the brutal conflict in Rwanda received widespread media coverage in Spain and abroad recently. The missionaries were awarded the Communications and Humanities Prize, one of eight Prince of Asturias Prizes presented annually.